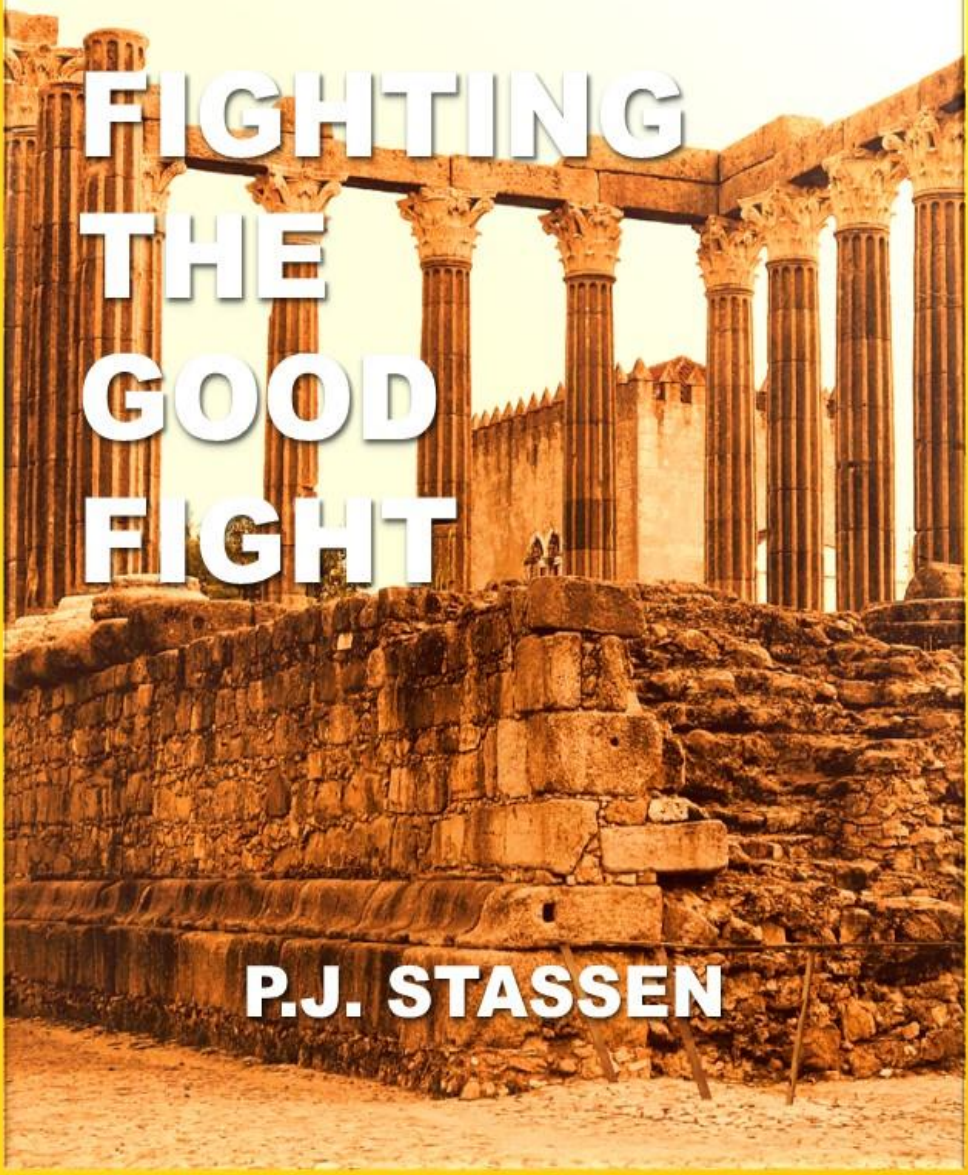
Christianity:

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT



P.J. STASSEN

Christianity

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

An Easy Reader for Busy People on the Run

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ISBN 978-0-6397-5898-5

P.J. Stassen
Centurion
SOUTH AFRICA

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CONTENTS

PART ONE: SALVATION 12

1. TANSTAAFL: There Ain't No Such a Thing as A Free Lunch 13
2. Six Who Were Saved 19
3. The Blood of the Cross 23
4. The Gift of God is Eternal Life 27
5. The Grand Invitation 30
6. The Greatest Story Ever Told 34
7. The King's Message is Urgent! 37
8. When I See the Blood 40

PART TWO: COUNSELLING 43

9. Are You Losing Your Soul? 44
10. How Christians Deal with Imposter Syndrome 46
11. Just Like a Tree Standing by the Water 50
12. Labouring for a Full Reward 52
13. Love vs. Hate 55
14. My Grace is Sufficient for Thee 58
15. Nature's Gorgeous Palette 61
16. Not Good Enough? Join the Club! 64
17. Significant Work is Heaven 68
18. So You Thought You Were Only a Zero Going Nowhere? 73
19. So You Want to Be a Star? 76
20. The Anatomy of Hypocrisy 81
21. The Art and Science of Gratitude 84

22. The Art of Common Sense 88
23. The Broken Heart 91
24. The Divine Gift of Vulnerability 93
25. The Four Seasons of Life 96
26. The Touch of the Master's Hand 99
27. There is Life After Depression 102
28. Waters of Life 107
29. What Every Boy and Girl Should Know 110
30. What-Ifs That Often Plague Young Christians 112
31. What Jesus Christ Promised the Overcomer 117
32. When Hatred Turns Toxic 119
33. Where Joy and Peace Will Flourish 123
34. Wolf vs. Sheep 130
35. The Awesome Calling of Stewardship 132
36. Man in the Mirror 135
37. Man's Search for the True Elixir of Life 139
38. Drop the 'Depresso' (Beer 142)
39. Everybody Needs Somebody Sometime 146
40. The Furnace, the Forge and the Hammer 150
41. The Miracle of Spiritual Regeneration 153
42. The Picture of Dorian Gray 157
43. Who Are the Children of God? 159
44. Why I Will Never Consult a Fortune-teller 164
45. Don't Trust the Psychics 170
46. What That Psychic Never Told You 173
47. Why Christians Don't Waste Their Time with Spiritualism 180
48. Why I Won't Waste My Time with New Age Spirituality 186
49. Why I Won't Waste My Time with Scientology 189
50. Why I Trust Jesus Christ with My Future 194

PART THREE: CONSECRATION 200

51. The Perfection Demanded by God 201
52. The Power of Surrender 204
53. The Science of Humility 207
54. To Be Like Jesus (Really?) 210

PART FOUR: INTERCESSION 216

55. Prayer of Job: Hero of Faith 217
56. Spiritual Warfare: The Prayer Journal 221
57. The Christian's Duty to Pray 225
58. The Christian's Duty Toward Israel 232
59. What It Means to Pray 235
60. Christians and The Apocalypse: Brace Yourselves 237
61. The Armour of God 240

PART FIVE: CHARITY 242

62. Never Knock Good Works 243

Acknowledgements 6

Foreword 7

Introduction 9

Invitation 248

Recommended Sources 249

Author's Profile 255

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Grateful for/to:

1. Bible translations interchangeably consulted:

King James Version (KJV/KJV+) & *Modern King James Version* (MKJV) unless otherwise indicated e.g., *Young's Literal Translation* (YLT) & *Hebraic Roots Bible* (HRB). The reader may find that, occasionally, I have inserted capitals (in brackets) into Scripture references for the purpose of clarity.

2. E-Sword.net: *The Sword of the Lord with an Electronic Edge (Free Bible Study for the PC).* Online 2021.

3. All the sources, scholars, historical figures and authors I have been allowed to mention, quote or use as examples in the course of writing.

4. Image: Ana Figuei Redo (Pexels/Pixabay)/Cover Design: PJ Stassen.

5. Cecilia Stassen, for her ongoing assistance, encouragement and invaluable help.

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Foreword

An informative book, I believe, should be like a sumptuous dinner ... lavish, interesting, easily digestible and to be remembered for years afterwards, and with this book I have aimed to accomplish exactly that, for what could be more interesting and memorable than the persona, life and ministry of a man who has changed the history of the world to the matchless extent that Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) had done?

Unlike many postmodernists, who have so superficially dismissed the historical Jesus (for all intents and purposes) as nothing more than a deluded first-century religious fanatic and rabble rouser of a charlatan who was arrested by the authorities, not as political zealot or aspiring messiah, but as a common, albeit charismatic public nuisance who disingenuously passed off cheap street magicians' illusions as Biblical quality miracles, i.e., postmodernists who today, like pagan sorcerers and derelict, toothless oriental mystics, dare to determine the measure of a man and his words by (of all things!) the application of coloured beads.

I, instead, insist that only a carpenter-rabbi of His divine origin, moral stature and matchless wisdom could have transformed this 1970s runaway freight-train and weirds-mobile of a cynical, suburban hedonist and amoral agnostic into a person so enamoured with this Messiah that I, in the sunset season of my life, have aspired to write not only one book about His sacred cause and merciful gospel, but several.

Today, when I read the popular atheists of our times, or debate a seasoned agnostic about the existence of God, I can only heartily agree with the wise theologians who, upon hearing people say that the character of the first-century Jesus of history was so remarkable that He must have been 'forged' (and should be considered a 'fake') instead have so aptly retorted (among others) as follows (my paraphrasing):

"*The man Jesus of Nazareth was so unique, gifted, remarkable and special that only a real Jesus Christ could have forged a Jesus Christ; furthermore, if the Bible really were only a collection of fairy tales, then why is it either banned or severely persecuted in at least 52 countries?*"

PJ Stassen
Centurion, South Africa.
December 2021.

Introduction

I wrote this book, not as a theologian (which I am not), but as a sinner saved by grace and a social commentator concerned with the cause and future of Christianity in the world. This book comprises the following themes:

Part 1: Salvation: Discussing the miracle of Jesus Christ's Gospel of 'Good News', i.e., salvation by faith in the risen Christ, Saviour of the world and Messiah of the Jews, offered to all but forced on none and made possible by the mercy, grace and favour of God predicated on the life, ministry, sacrifice, resurrection and righteousness of Jesus Christ: Son of God, Son of David and Son of Man.

Part 2: Counselling: Discussing the desperate plight of the anxious Christian to be embraced and supported by fellow pilgrims not to faint but to be encouraged to be able to walk the life of faith, hope and love as inspired by the Holy Spirit, the 'Paraclete' and Comforter (i.e., Gk. 'Paracletos', the 'One called alongside to help').

Part 3. Consecration: From the Latin 'consecrat', discussing the calling of the Christian to dedicate and devote his/her life to the sacred cause of Jesus Christ's Gospel of salvation by faith founded on the Word of God comprising the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament: Christ concealed) and the New Testament (Christ revealed).

Part 4. Intercession: Discussing the duty, obligation and privilege of the Christian to pray and intercede not only for self but also for others.

Part 5. Charity: Discussing the Christian's calling as God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

The story of the Bible and God's designs for man; the Commandments of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, can, for all intents and purposes, miraculously integrated to be summarised by a single Scripture reference:

> *"For as by one man's disobedience [THE FIRST ADAM] many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One [THE LAST ADAM, JESUS CHRIST] shall many be made righteous."*
> [Romans5:19MKJV].

I am reminded of what C.S. Lewis has said (my paraphrasing):

> *"There are only two kinds of people, i.e., those who say to God, 'Thy will be done!' and those to whom God must say, "Okay then ... have it your way!"*

The lot and final destiny of every (fully informed & evangelised) person that ever lived will, in other words, be decided on this, i.e., a choice between Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Jesus and Barabbas, Christ and Satan.

With those who object that anyone could exercise such a critical choice still wrongly from pure ignorance, or from cultural and/or religious biases, I can only in sympathy say that I fully concur, and although I insist that there is no other name but the Name of Jesus Christ by which we are saved, we probably should leave such metaphysical judgments (i.e., in respect of the 'inadequately informed and poorly evangelised') for God to decide and deal with.

There is a huge difference between being a 'sinner' and being 'ungodly'/'wicked'. All the 'ungodly' and 'wicked' are sinners, but not all 'sinners' are necessarily 'ungodly or 'wicked' ... they are simply lost and must be found. God has said:

> *"And He [GOD] said, I will make all My goodness pass before you [MOSES], and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before you. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."*
>
> [Exodus33:10MKJV].

Bon voyage!

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PART ONE: SALVATION

Chapter 1

THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH [TANSTAAFL]

1. **TANSTAAFL.** Acronym meaning *'There Ain't No Such Thing as A Free Lunch'.*

> *"The 'free lunch' refers to the once-common tradition of saloons in the United States providing a 'free' lunch to patrons who had purchased at least one drink ... TANSTAAFL, on the other hand, indicates an acknowledgement that in reality a person or a society cannot get 'something for nothing'."*
>
> [Wikipedia].

2 **Christianity.** In Christianity the principle of TANS-TAAFL can be illustrated vividly as follows:

2.1 **Proposition #1: The Bread of Life intended for Christians (and as commemorated during the sacrament of 'The Lord's Supper') did not come for free but was 'financed' (paid for) by the broken body of Jesus Christ.**

> *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? ... For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore*

whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."
[1Corinthians10:16; 11:23-27MKJV].

2.2 Proposition #2: The Blood of Redemption intended for Christians (and as commemorated during the sacrament of 'The Lord's Supper') did not come for free but was 'financed' (paid for) by the tortured and bleeding body of Jesus Christ.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"
[1Corinthians10:16MKJV].

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
[Colossians1:13-14MKJV].

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ... And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission ...

"Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others ... And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others ...

"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified ... Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus ... Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant,

wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

[Hebrews9:14,22,25: 10:14,19,29KJV].

2.3 **Proposition #3: The Living Water intended for Christians did not come for free but was 'financed' by the terrible thirst Jesus Christ Himself first has had to endure on the cross.**

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water ... Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

"The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw ...

"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

[John7:38; 4:9-15; 19:28-29KJV].

2.4 **Proposition #4: The Healing intended for Christians did not come for free but was 'financed' (paid for) by Jesus Christ**

in the thirty-nine stripes administered to Him by the Roman soldiers with the Roman whip.

"*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."*

[Isaiah53:5KJV].

"And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again."

[Matthew20:19KJV].

2.5 Proposition #5: The (unmerited) Righteousness intended for Christians did not come for free but was 'financed' by Jesus Christ in His being Righteous as the sinless ('Paschal') sacrificial Lamb of God and who eventually died a vicarious death on the cross for the sins of the world.

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.).

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord ... And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

[Romans5:17-21; Philippians3:9KJV].

2.6 Proposition #6: The Resurrection intended for Christians did not come for free but was 'financed' (paid

for) by Jesus Christ with His own death at the cross of Calvary (Golgotha).

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

[Hebrews9:27-28KJV].

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

[John11:25-27KJV].

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time ...."

[1Corinthians15:3-8KJV].

2.7 **Proposition #7: The priceless gift of <u>SALVATION</u> that only Jesus Christ can give did not come for free but was 'financed' (paid for) by Jesus Christ, although He was rich, becoming poor so that we could become 'rich'.**

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

[2Corinthians8:9KJV].

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

[Romans6:23KJV].

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Chapter 2

SIX WHO WERE SAVED

1. **Introduction.** 'The Magnificent SIX' who were saved include:

1.1 **The Pharisee Saul who became Paul.** When Saul of Tarsus was still persecuting the fledgling Christian movement of *'The Way'* in the early Church, he once had stood holding the cloaks of those who were engaged in stoning to death *Stephen,* the first martyr for Christ. After his historic 'Damascus Road' experience and conversion to Christianity, he, however, became the Apostle Paul (first 'Saul') to write the bulk of the Bible's *New Testament Epistles:*

"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he [PAUL], being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

"Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

"And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." [Acts7:54-60].

"And as he journeyed, he [PAUL] came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord?

"And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

"And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he [PAUL] was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.""

[Acts9:3-9KJV].

1.2 **The Apostle Peter.** The same headstrong, cowardly Apostle Peter who had denied Jesus three times before the cock crowed during the events that had led up to the crucifixion, later came back with a vengeance to preach a fiery Gospel so much so that about 3000 people were converted and baptised on one single day.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

""And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

[Acts2:36-41KJV].

1.3 **The Roman Centurion.** The same Roman centurion who had grown up with the idols of Rome and pagan superstitions of his boyhood, had, at the crucifixion and, with

the Stygian darkness of what appeared to have been a solar eclipse mercifully covering the bruised helplessness of Christ, finally had to confess:

"Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."
[Matthew27:54KJV].

1.4 **The woman at Jacob's Well.** The same adulterous woman who had had five husbands and later after her conversation with Jesus about the 'living water of life' ran to exclaim to her friends:

"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"
[John4:6-29KJV].

1.5 **The rich publican Zacchaeus.** The same rich and dishonest publican later had to confess:

"Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."
[Luke19:8KJV].

1.6 **The Evildoer on the Cross.** The same evildoer who had grown up as a delinquent and hardened criminal, enough to deserve the ultimate penalty (crucifixion), was saved by Jesus Christ in the dying moments of his life when Jesus said:

"Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."
[Luke23:43KJV].

P.S. In one single sentence the evildoer's death-sentence was commuted to a life-sentence ... Eternal Life!

2. **The invitation still stands.** The Bible says:

> *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."*
>
> [Isaiah1:18-20KJV].
>
> *"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*
>
> [Revelation22:16-17KJV].

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Chapter 3

THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS

1. **The Significance of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Calvary (Golgotha).** This is only a summary about the significance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.

1.1 **Born-Again Christians have been REDEEMED through the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.**

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
[1Peter1:18-19KJV].

1.2 **Born-again Christians have been JUSTIFIED & RECONCILED to GOD through the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.**

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."
[Romans 3:24-26 KJV].

1.3 **Born-again Christians have been SANCTIFIED through the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.**

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

[Hebrews 13:12KJV].

1.4 **Born-again Christians have been PURIFIED by the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.**

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

[1 John 1:7-10KJV].

1.5 **Born-again Christians have been empowered to SERVE GOD through the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.**

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

[Hebrews 9:14KJV].

1.6 **Born-again Christians have been granted access to the HOLIEST OF HOLIES (in the Heavenly Tabernacle) through the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.**

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."

[Hebrews 10:19-20KJV].

1.7 **Born-again Christians have been granted ETERNAL LIFE by the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.**

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

[John 6:53-56KJV].

1.8 Born-again Christians have been blessed with VICTORY over Satan through the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

[Revelation 12:11KJV].

1.9 Born-again Christians will enjoy HEAVENLY JOY through the blood (sacrifice) of the cross.

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

[Revelation 7:9-14KJV].

2. **Conclusion.** Does the reader feel ashamed, embarrassed and/or guilty about his/her 'chequered' past? The answer is the power in the life, ministry, teachings, sacrifice, blood, resurrection and RIGHTEOUSNESS of JESUS CHRIST. The Bible says:

> *"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."*
>
> [1John1:7KJV].

"There is a fountain filled with blood;
Drawn from Immanuel's veins ...
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

[William Cowper, 1731-1800]

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Chapter 4

THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE

1. To **Whom was the GIFT promised?** The Gift was promised to everyone (offered to all but forced on none) i.e., pagans, neo-pagans, atheists, agnostics, secular humanists, skeptics, scientists, academics, heathens, philosophers, politicians, gangsters crooks, prostitutes, criminals and even tax-collectors irrespective of age, socio-economic status, race, colour, gender, political affiliation or religious persuasion.

The primary feature of a gift is that it must be received, it cannot be earned:

> *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men ... For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life ... Come to Me [JESUS] all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*
>
> [Titus2:11; John3:16; Matthew11:28MKJV].

2. **What must people do to receive the GIFT?** Now some will tell you that you cannot (and should not) do anything, since God has already decided who should go to Heaven and who should perish in Hell and that anything you would try to do or decide today would be of no avail. If you, however, believe the Bible the way Evangelical Christians do, the command is simple: *Repent and believe the Gospel!* The Absolute & Infinite Sovereignty of God does not clash with but is in perfect harmony with the free will of man to either accept or reject the LIGHT or the DARKNESS, GOOD or EVIL.

"But as many as received Him [JESUS] He gave to them authority to become the children of God, to those who believe on His [JESUS'] name."

[John1:12MKJV].

"And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God draws near. Repent, and believe the gospel."

[Mark1:15MKJV].

"Because if you confess the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

[Romans10:9MKJV].

3. **No other Saviour & Mediator but Jesus Christ.** The Bible teaches:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

[Romans6:23].

"And there is salvation in no other One; for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

[Acts4:12].

"Because if you confess the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

[Romans10:9].

"And it shall be that everyone who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, and your household."

[Acts2:21; 16:31MKJV].

"And I [JESUS] give to them eternal life, and they shall never ever perish, and not anyone shall pluck them out of My hand."

[John10:28MKJV].

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let the one hearing say, Come! And let the one who is thirsty come. And he willing, let him take of the Water of Life freely."

[Revelation22:17MKJV].

P.S. Do the math: Any 'predestination' teaching or doctrine that tries to change, ignore, alter, override or dismiss these promises of God as obsolete, unnecessary and incorrect with the purpose of teaching people that raising children in the fear of God, spreading the Gospel, launching missions in foreign fields and evangelising nations all over the globe are all a waste of time will be making a mockery of the Gospel, Promises and Words of a holy God.

I have never heard of a 'FREE GIFT' offered to 'all men' (Titus2:11MKJV) that was either *(i) denied to the one who in a sincere and childlike manner had asked for it,* or *(ii) forced violently on the one who for the love of evil had vehemently rejected it.* The GIFT of Eternal Life is offered to ALL but forced on NONE.

> *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men ... For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life ... Come to Me [JESUS] all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*
>
> [Titus2:11; John3:16; Matthew11:28MKJV].

Chapter 5

THE GRAND INVITATION

1. **The Invitation.** One day, somewhere in a dusty street in Old Jerusalem or in the plain 'upper room' where He was engaged in washing His disciples' feet, the humble carpenter-rabbi from Nazareth stood and said:

> *"Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that where I am, you may be also."*
>
> [John14:1-3MKJV].

This invitation, at the time directed at His disciples, are today repeated the world over, and not for Christians only as some may think, but also for Jews and everyone irrespective of race, skin tone, gender, age, socio-economic status, political affiliation and current religious persuasion. The term 'Christian' denotes those who had already responded to the invitation and who now are disciples, as it were. The Bible says:

> *"... And the disciples were first called Christian in Antioch."*
>
> [Acts11:26bMKJV].

Invitations for people to make their peace with God were frequent. Both the *Old & New Testaments* are replete with such invitations to all and sundry, e.g.:

"Come now, and let us reason together, says Jehovah; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool."

[Isaiah1:18MKJV].

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you ... "

[James4:8aMKJV].

"Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke on you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls ... "

[Matthew11:28-30aMKJV].

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him."

[John3:16-17MKJV].

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let the one hearing say, Come! And let the one who is thirsty come. And he willing, let him take of the Water of Life freely."

[Revelation22:17MKJV].

2. **Rejecting Jesus Christ.** I am sure that most people today have heard the way how some cynical politicians (no names, no pack-drill) in the past have referred to the masses of ordinary Christians ('conservatives') in society as a 'basket of deplorables'. Well, although clearly meant to insult, the statement was not necessarily all that wrong; even Jesus Christ has hinted to the effect in His parable about the rich man who had extended an invitation to some highbrow friends of his and, after they had all declined the offer, he had said to his servants:

"The kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who made a marriage for his son. And he sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they would not come. Again he sent out other servants, saying, Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the marriage.

"But not caring, they went their ways, one to his field, another to

his trading. And the rest took his servants and treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard, he was angry. And he sent out his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

"Then he said to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the exits of the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite them to the marriage.

"So the servants went out into the highways and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good. And the wedding was filled with reclining guests."

[Matthew22:2-10MKJV].

Now, I know that today, the worldwide Christian community comprises wealthy people, educated people, poor people and illiterate people from all socio-cultural strata and walks of life, but for all practical intents and purposes we probably are, in the eyes of the atheists, secular humanists, neo-pagans and skeptics of this world, that 'basket of deplorables' (both 'bad' and 'good') whom the king finally had received at his feast.

Here's the deal: I would rather live as a labourer in the vineyard of the Heavenly Father than as a prince in the ostentatious palaces of Satan; and, I would rather serve as lowly servant in Jesus Christ's 'basket of deplorables' than in Satan's chaotic, higgledy-piggledy vats of confused cynics and scoffers.

3. **The Grand Invitation.** In the real world the king from that parable is God the Father, and He has invited everyone to His Son's Grand Wedding:

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last ... I, Jesus did send my messenger to testify to you these things concerning the assemblies; I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star! And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and he who is hearing—let him say, Come;

and he who is thirsting—let him come; and he who is willing—let him take the water of life freely."

[Revelation22:13; 22:16-17MKJV].

4. **Ashamed of (or embarrassed by) Jesus Christ?** But the King's Son, Jesus Christ has also warned:

"Therefore whoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man shall also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

[Mark8:38MKJV].

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Chapter 6

THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

1. Proposition #1. Good vs. Evil.

Most reasonable people would agree that there is a clear difference between *good and bad, light and darkness* and *lawful and awful (criminal) behaviour.*

Even those agnostics and atheists who usually support the idea that, *'nothing is really good or evil, but only thinking that makes it so',* themselves make a *'good vs. bad'* value-judgement when they say, "*Religion is evil!"* or, *"Bringing prayer and the Bible to a public school is unfair!"*

2. Proposition #2. Crime and Punishment.

Most reasonable people would probably agree that people who do bad or evil (awful, criminal) things should be punished.

This proposition is clearly borne out by the existence in society of comprising institutions focused on *legal training, laws & regulations, justice systems, prisons, jails, penitentiaries, a robust judiciary, law-enforcement churning out judges, advocates, barristers, attorneys, lawyers, legal practitioners, books and encyclopaedias on the legal profession* of all kinds.

3. Proposition #3. All have sinned.

Most reasonable people would probably agree that they, at one time or another, have done bad things. There are no perfect people, and most of us ought to concede that we have done some bad thing (or things) sometimes and/or somewhere in our past.

4. **Proposition #4. The need for a Saviour.**

Most reasonable people would probably agree that we cannot lift ourselves by our own boots by rescuing ourselves from our own imperfections, our propensity to do bad (awful, criminal) things and all our moral and social failures, and this fact is borne out by our overworked judiciary and crowded prison populations.

5. **Propositions #5. The Gift of Forgiveness.**

Most reasonable people would probably agree that the greatest gift any person charged with (serious) bad or unlawful (awful, criminal) behaviour could be offered is the *free offer of a blanket amnesty and formal reprieve* from a judge to escape a lengthy prison term or even a death sentence.

6. **Proposition #6. There is a Saviour.**

The possibility of a *universal blanket amnesty* for our bad or unlawful (awful, criminal) behaviour as imperfect, fallible human beings was introduced when Jesus Christ (God in human form) died on the cross at Calvary (Golgotha) for the sins of the world.

This forgiveness (offered to all but forced on none!) is extended to all people irrespective of race, gender, current religious persuasion or political affiliation, provided they repent and accept JESUS CHRIST as LORD & SAVIOUR.

> *"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent! For the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."*
>
> [Matthew4:17MKJV].
>
> *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting*

life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes on Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."

[John3:16-18MKJV].

"*But now, being made free from sin, and having become slaves to God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

[Romans6:22-23MKJV].

"*I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify these things to you over the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! ... And let the one hearing say, Come! And let the one who is thirsty come. And he willing, let him take of the Water of Life freely."*

[Revelation22:16-17MKJV].

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Chapter 7

THE KING'S MESSAGE IS URGENT!

1. **First Telegram Inscription.** The inscription on the weather-worn signpost reads:

> *'The First Telegram "What Hath God Wrought": Was sent from the Capitol in Washington to Baltimore May 24, 1844 over wires laid along the right of way of the B & O Railroad adjacent to this highway. The telegraph was invented by Samuel F.B. Morse (1791-1872). Maryland Historical Trust, Maryland State Highway Administration."*
>
> ['Preservation Maryland', online].

This was long before the advent of facsimile machines and e-mail; clearly, already during the 1800s, the 'message' (for whatever reason or purpose) has become urgent and *Wild Bill Hickock's* 'Pony Express' was no longer sufficient.

2. **The King's Message also urgent.** The Bible says:

> *"And David said to Ahimelech, And is there not here under your hand spear or sword? For I have not brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business needed haste."*
>
> [1Samuel 21:8MKJV].

Today, as I write, the King's business still needs haste. Jesus Christ, the King of king and LORD of lords [Revelation17:14] has said:

> *"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Therefore go and teach all nations,*

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen."

[Matthew28:18-20MKJV].

This message, already two millenniums in the making, is still as urgent as ever. In tandem with this message the prayer:

" ... Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done ... on earth as it is in heaven."

[Matthew6:10KJV].

3. **The bird on the telegraph line.** In his book, *Prayer & Faith,* Dr. R.A. Torrey relates the story of the bird sitting on the telegraph line, blissfully unaware of the myriads of messages frantically passing to and fro inside the telegraph wire below his feet. What appeared to the bird as only a dull, dusty and convenient perching platform was indeed an important medium of communication between all kinds of people, i.e., private, public, business, military, government officials and perhaps even the president of the country.

4. **God's 'Holy Telegraph' is still urgent.** Today we have this peculiar situation where many people still make the same mistake as the bird; they look at the Bible and see only a dusty old book nothing out of the ordinary; in fact, so insignificant and inconsequential is the Bible for some people that my wife's first (pretty, white) Bible was purchased for her by her father at a bargain price at a pawn shop (!); the previous owner (or thief of somebody else's Bible), probably a derelict drunk needing liquor money and totally oblivious to the timeless, lifesaving messages running stealthily and non-stop to and fro in the 'telegraph wire ' from the *Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation.* If only he

had opened the covers and searched the pages instead, he might have read:

> *"Come now, and let us reason together, says Jehovah; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken."*
>
> [Isaiah1:18-20MKJV].
>
> *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes on Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."*
>
> [John3:16-18MKJV].
>
> "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*
>
> [Romans6:23MKJV].

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Chapter 8

WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD

1. **Moses the Deliverer.** During the days of old Israel and the bondage of the Jewish nation in Egypt, Moses was sent as God's choice of a deliverer to the hard-pressed nation suffering under the despotic rule of who historians today believe probably must have been *Rameses II.* Of the ten plagues that were sent to soften Pharaoh's heart to a point where he would let the Israelites go, the (final) tenth plague of *the death of all the firstborn in Egypt* surely must have been the most devastating of them all.

2. **Escaping the Wrath.** To escape from the wrath of God (i.e., to smite all the firstborn in Egypt) the people had to take the *blood of a lamb without blemish,* and, as God said:

> *"And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to des-troy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."*
>
> [Exodus12:7, 12,13KJV].

3. **Celebrating 'Passover'.** The feast of 'Passover' is kept as a memorial by Jews to this day, and its corollary in the Christian faith is found in the Christians' belief that *the blood of Jesus Christ, God's unblemished Paschal Lamb* slain for the sins of

the world struck, metaphorically, on the 'side posts' and 'upper door post' of their hearts will provide that divine protection that justification by faith founded on the righteousness of Jesus Christ (through His sacrifice and blood) had wrought at Calvary (Golgotha) where He was crucified. The Bible teaches:

> *"For the first tabernacle was prepared, in which was both the lampstand, and the table, and the setting out of the loaves, which is called Holies. And after the second veil was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies ...*
>
> *" ... nor by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He [JESUS] entered once for all into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption for us ...*
>
> *" ... For Christ has not entered into the Holy of Holies made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, even as the high priest enters into the Holy of Holies every year with the blood of others ...*
>
> *" ... Therefore, brothers, having boldness to enter into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies having been washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for He is faithful who promised)."*
>
> [Hebrews9:2-3,12,24,25; 10:19-23MKJV].
>
> "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
>
> [1John1:7-9KJV].

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PART TWO: COUNSELLING

Chapter 9

ARE YOU LOSING YOUR SOUL?

1. **Forbes & Wealth.** On his blog, *'Grow Business Grow'*, George Bakmchev recalls the story of nine rich men and their fate in life as told in *Forbes.com:*

> *"In 1923, a meeting of America's most powerful men took place at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Attending the meeting were the following 9 financiers and power brokers:*
>
> *- The president of America's largest steel company*
> *- The president of America's largest utility company*
> *- The president of America's largest gas company*
> *- The president of the New York Stock Exchange*
> *- The president of the Bank of International Settlements*
> *- The nation's greatest wheat speculator*
> *- The nation's greatest bear speculator on wall street*
> *- The head of the world's greatest monopoly*
> *- A member of President Harding's cabinet.*
>
> *... these were the captains of their respective industries and some of the most successful businessmen of the era."*
>
> [Grow Business Grow/Forbes.com, online].

2. **How things eventually turned out.** Within 25 years, all of these great men had met with a sad end to their careers or lives:

> *- "The president of the largest steel company, Charles Schwab, died a bankrupt man.*
> *- The president of the largest utility company, Samuel Insull, died penniless.*

- The president of the largest gas company, Howard Hobson, suffered a mental breakdown, ending up in an insane asylum.
- The president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, had just been released from prison.
- The bank president, Leon Fraser, had taken his own life.
- The wheat speculator, Arthur Cutten, died penniless.
- The head of the world's greatest monopoly, Ivar Krueger the 'match king', also had taken his life.
- The member of President Harding's cabinet, Albert Fall, had just been given a pardon from prison so that he could die at home.
- The Wall Street Bear, Jesse Lauriston Livermore, famous speculator in the stock and commodities markets ... committed suicide in 1940."

[Grow Business Grow/Forbes.com, online].

3. **What the Bible teaches.** Jesus has warned:

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it ... For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

[Matthew10:39; 16:26KJV].

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Chapter 10

HOW CHRISTIANS DEAL WITH IMPOSTER SYNDROME

1. **Imposter Syndrome defined.**

> *"Imposter Syndrome (also known as imposter phenomenon, imposterism, fraud syndrome or the imposter experience) is a psychological pattern in which individuals doubt their skills, talents or accomplishments and have a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a 'fraud'. Despite external evidence of their competence, those experiencing this phenomenon remain convinced that they are frauds, and do not deserve all they have achieved."*
>
> [Wikipedia].

2. **Vision (Physiologically).** Christians, like other people, know that vision (eyesight) will invariably deteriorate with age. As they grow older, they probably will increasingly have to rely on all kinds of optical, medical and even surgical aids to improve or enhance eyesight; not all will be as fortunate (blessed) as Moses was who, according to the Bible:

> *"And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."*
>
> [Deuteronomy 34:7KJV].

3. **The scourge of 'Imposter Syndrome'.** Many Christians may tell us that they suffer from this syndrome, i.e., that they feel that they are 'frauds' (imposters or hypocrites) whose contributions toward Christianity and labour of love for the Kingdom of God will probably (at worst) amount to nothing or eventually prove to

have been (at best) mediocre, questionable or of little value, constantly beating themselves up over past moral, social and/or career and ministry failures.

The older they get. the more they will come to the realization of their own fallibility and multiplicities of moral and other failures; their days replete with reminders and images (flashbacks probably due to the diabolical 'accuser of the brethren') of past mistakes and incidents where they have injured or disappointed colleagues, family, friends or loved ones.

On the one hand Jonathan Edwards reminds us that the only 'contribution' we really could ever make toward our own salvation will have been the sin that has made it necessary while Charles Spurgeon writes that the very phenomenon of sanctification (spiritual growth) probably means that, as consecration and holiness (and spiritual 'vision' or 'mental acuity') over time will increase, Christians will grow increasingly sensitive and critical of their own (often 'heinous') past sins and failures.

4. **The Good News.** The Bible says:

> *"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."*
> [2Corinthians4:16KJV].

- It stands to reason that, as the outward man 'perish', the *eyesight* will (physically, physiologically) deteriorate; but,

- as the inward man is day by day renewed, our *spiritual hindsight* will increasingly improve with age to *'20/20 hindsight spiritual vision' ...* thus making past failures more spiritually 'visible' (and infinitely more perceptible and painful) in terms of the principle of 'experiential learning' that serves to make us more vigilant to never repeat the same mistakes ever again.

It was only at an advanced age that the true impact and implications of my many childhood and youthful mistakes and indiscretions (and how they have hurt, harmed, and damaged others, many of them long dead) have fully dawned on me, an important experience should we ever aspire to be of any encouragement to and must show compassion toward others in times of their debilitating moral failure.

At such times the Promises of God nevertheless remain faithful:

"I will lift up my eyes to the hills. Where shall my help come from? My help comes from Jehovah, who made Heaven and earth."

[Psalm121:1-2MKJV].

"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

[1John1:7-9MKJV].

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

[Romans 6:23MKJV].

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. But the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

[Romans8:1-2MKJV].

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

[Psalm23:1-3KJV].

5. **The Truce.** This is how the *Master of Spiritual Counselling (Jesus)* dealt with a major case of (what I surmise, suspect was) the Apostle Peter's own 'imposter syndrome' after he so disgracefully had denounced Jesus Christ prior to His crucifixion:

> *"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the SECOND time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the THIRD time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."*
>
> [John21:15-17KJV].

THREE times the question, "*Lovest thou me?"* Why?

(One for each of the three times Peter had denied Jesus during the night of His arrest, hearing, and death. Even then, on the eve of Hs departure, the Good Shepherd was fully aware and conversant with the desperate need of the apostle for forgiveness and closure i.r.o. that ghastly incident).

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Chapter 11

JUST LIKE A TREE STANDING BY THE WATER

1. **The Miracle of Photosynthesis.** 'Photosynthesis' is defined as follows:

> *"Photosynthesis, the process by which green plants and certain other organisms transform light energy into chemical energy. During photosynthesis in green plants, light energy is captured and used to convert water, carbon dioxide, and minerals into oxygen and energy-rich organic compounds."*
>
> [Encyclopaedia Britannica].

2. **The Blessing of a garden.** Most people will agree that gardens are therapeutic and of immense spiritual value. Even when God created Adam & Eve, they were introduced to the beauty and wonder of their 'living quarters', the *Garden of Eden.*

> *"And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward in Eden. And there He put the man whom He had formed. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden. And from there it was divided and became four heads."*
>
> [Genesis2:8,10MKJV].

3. **The process.** Leaves on e.g., trees use sunlight, water (from the river) and carbon dioxide (through stomata) to produce oxygen and in the process colouring the leaves green as the sunlight (red and blue light waves) is absorbed by the pigment *chlorophyll* in *chloroplast.* Without this process no

oxygen will be released for us to breathe. This wonder of nature is affirmed when God describes the blessed man and woman by using it as His analogy-of-choice:

> *"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivulets of water that brings forth its fruit in its seasons, and its leaf shall not wither, and all which he does shall be blessed."*
>
> [Psalm1:3MKJV].

4. **Spiritual Water & Light.** Jesus has, during His short tenure on earth, introduced Himself as the One who dispenses the divine water that *'shall be in the blessed one a well of water springing up into everlasting life',* and as the *Light of the World.*

> *"I have come as a Light into the world, so that whoever believes on Me should not remain in darkness."*
>
> [John12:46MKJV].

5. **The Heavenly Water of Life.** If you can read this, the invitation still stands:

> *"And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely ... And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb ... And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*
>
> [Revelation21:6; 22:1, 17KJV].

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Chapter 12

LABOURING FOR A FULL REWARD

1. **Conscription Woes.** On 4 January 1966 at about 9 a.m. I walked into the army barracks in Pretoria, South Africa to begin my stint of mandatory conscription in the country's Defence Force of the time; I was 18 years old and totally ignorant about the military and army life.

Although today I am a voracious reader on diverse subjects which would also e.g., include the *Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), WW1 (1914-1918]* and *WW2 (1939-1945),* the *Battle of Normandy (D-Day),* the *Battle of Stalingrad ('Enemy at the Gates')* etc. at the time I was terrified about anything even remotely connected to war and military training.

My grandfather on my mother's side had, during WW2, served in the *North African (Desert) Campaign* and all the post-war tales about wrecked marriages, abandoned and destitute families, the issue of war widows and South African soldiers (for instance like my grandfather's brother) announced 'missing-in-battle' after the *Battle for Tobruk* etc. only served to aggravate such aversions and fears.

2. **On the Shooting Range.** Whilst into basic training, we were eventually dragged (metaphorically speaking) kicking and screaming to the army shooting range at 'Voortrekker-hoogte' (formerly 'Robert's Heights'; now 'Thaba Tshwane') for our introduction into marksmanship.

However, totally outraged and disenchanted with army life due to the rigorous training regime, the early hours, the cold showers and loss of personal affects pilfered by the army's civilian cleaning staff, most of us did not take the shooting too seriously;

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all we wanted was to get the week set aside for this part of our training over and done with as quickly as possible.

For instance, it was no fun having irate Sergeant M., a burly war veteran with the bulk of a Bulgarian heavyweight wrestler, purple in the face from years of hard drinking and not unlike a hippopotamus dressed in an army uniform, lift the conscripts (i.e., boys barely out of puberty) by the web-belt and drop them like a sack of potatoes in the gravel to rearrange their posture when aiming at the target while lying down.

The conscripts' irreverent referring to the sight of another sergeant, i.e., Sergeant O. (superintending the target-protocols from the sunken target-pits with only his head, sporting a monstrous moustache and emerging only now and then, bobbing up and down like a frightened mongoose on the lookout) did not help to improve our morale and attitudes either.

3. **The shock & disillusionment.** Great was our disappointment, however, after days of a monotonous diet of cabbage-sandwiches augmented with pinkish-yellow, overcooked beetroot and fatty brisket (called 'meat') intermingled with juvenile jesting and the mocking of the permanent force commissioned officers and NCOs, the final day was concluded with a formal 'award ceremony' with prizes for the top three marksmen in the group, and what a shock and disillusionment to us frolicking idiots ... had we known that we were shooting for prizes we would have taken the whole (so-called) darn 'circus' a good deal more seriously!

4. **Labour for a Full Reward!** God is not a hard, unreasonable and tyrannical taskmaster; the Bible teaches that we are not only allowed to but actually admonished to labour for a *full reward* in whatever we do for the Kingdom, as the saying goes, *'Only one life that will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last'.*

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

[Matthew6:19-21KJV].

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward ... Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward ... Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ ... And, behold, I [JESUS] come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

[2John1:8; 1Corinthians3:8,14; Colossians3:24; Revelation22:12-KJV].

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Chapter 13

LOVE vs. HATE

1. **Love vs. Hate?** Most of us would probably, either intuitively or instinctively, ascribe a *positive connotation* to the word 'Love' and a *negative* one to the word 'Hate'. We know from childhood that Jesus teaches that we are supposed to love, yes, even our enemies! But are we, for instance, allowed after all to ever 'hate' at all?

2. **In search for 'Context'.** The two words 'love' and 'hate' both are supposed to be *generically neutral ('apolitical')* words that only will come to 'life' with meaning only once used in a statement of some sorts, once 'context' has been established.

For instance, a person may *'love' wearing jewellery* and *'hate' going to Church;* or *'love' driving too fast* and *'hate' keeping to traffic laws* ... suddenly those earlier 'connotations' (of either positive or negative) have been completely upset and rendered useless and invalid, which, by the way, has nothing to do with *moral relativism* or *situational ethics and* everything with 'context'.

3. **We should learn to both love and hate wisely.** The fact is that we are not only allowed but also encouraged to not only love but to also hate, for instance:

- *"I love roses, babies and ice cream."*

- *"I hate war, crime and government corruption!"*

The whole purpose of education and personal development in a civilised society is not only to equip people with marketable administrative, mechanical, technical and managerial skills, but also to teach them to *(i) love noble, ethical and industrious values and behaviour* and *(ii) hate antisocial, wicked, criminal and unethical behaviour.*

4. **God is love.** Although God is love, He at times also hates. In fact, He hates many things. For instance, in the Bible at least seven things are mentioned that God particularly hates:

> *"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."*
>
> [Proverbs6:16-19KJV].

5. **God's Moral Compass.** The point is that we are admonished and encouraged to *love the good things* and *hate the evil things.* Without a moral compass or an ethical gold standard like the Bible and the civil laws founded on such values, right & wrong may become *people's opinions and sentiments* instead of based on *Absolute Truth* as represented by the greatest Lawgiver of all times, the 'I AM' of Moses and Mt. Sinai.

GOD has paid us the incomparable compliment of allowing free will so that whenever we must *choose between good and evil,* it will be *spontaneous, honest and sincere,* and not *useless, slavish, rigid conformity:*

> *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy*

days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."
[Deuteronomy30:19-20KJV].

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Chapter 14

MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE

1. **The Army Years.** During the 1990s and the years after I had completed my conscription driven 'national service' for my country in 1966, followed up by about half-a-dozen of intermittent 'military call-ups' over the years, I finally, in 1994, was released from my citizens' military obligations during our country's political transition to 'democracy'.

2. **GRACE Demonstrated.** Turning back the clock: Two incidents of note that will always be fondly remembered:

2.1 **The SWA-Angola Border War call-up.** During the 1970s, after I had completed my formal military training and had fulfilled all my additional obligations to my brigade (military police) years before, I suddenly got hit with a call-up instruction to the then theatre-of-war in SWA-Angola where the South African Defence Force was engaged in a border war with SWAPO and Fidel Castro's Cubans.

Although somewhat perturbed by the matter-of-fact official telegram, I still subserviently acquiesced and reported to the designated assembly point in Bloemfontein sometime later.

That first night, on my first round of mandatory guard-duty, I looked up to the glorious Milky Way stretching over the barren nocturnal Free State landscape and prayed: *"Lord, what am I doing here?"* I suspected that somewhere, somehow there must have been an administrative error, but just couldn't lay a finger on it.

The next day I went to my commandant and requested a formal inquiry into what I thought was an irregular call-up. Long story short, the next day a telex ('wire') arrived to inform my commandant that there had been a foul-up with the call-ups (!) and that I wasn't supposed to be there.

Next thing, I was on the train on my way back home 300 kms north of Bloemfontein (South Africa). By the way, I still believe that there wasn't a 'foul-up' with my 'call-up' but that they had done it on purpose. The army in those days used to employ the same trick as the merchant of old times who reportedly, to recoup some loss with a bag of grain or seed when he couldn't remember who had taken it, apparently had the habit of sending an invoice for the said item to every single customer on the books; being too lazy or (as farmers) simply too busy to bother, it is said that more than one customer sometimes obliged by paying up.

Similarly, our brigade staff in Pretoria, I later learned, had the clandestine policy of issuing as many call-up orders as is possible left, right and centre in the hope that they would get a good turn-up.

2.2 **Another border call-up in the Bushveldt.** During the early 1990s, when we were living in the wild, sub-tropical Bushveldt region of South Africa, the Defence Force again back-pedalled on its principles, and I was again slapped with call-ups for border duty on the South Africa-Botswana border; again I acquiesced and again I complained to the Lord:

"Lord, here I am after having fulfilled all of my mandatory military obligations teamed up with a bunch of frolicking youngsters half my age ... what am I doing here?"

Without complaining to any military authorities, the next day I was mysteriously, unceremoniously, transferred

from the 'expeditionary column' (the guys who were going to patrol the South-Africa/Botswana border) and, thanks to the 'age gap' between myself and the 'frolicking youngsters', returned to the commando-headquarters near my home where we were tasked with manning the radio-communication system for our column, thus allowing me to pursue my studies in peace, with exams looming.

My fondest memory here? Reclining on my lacklustre army-cot and discovering these words literally 'chalked-up' with white chalk on the ceiling of my tent years before, probably by another lonely and frustrated soldier: *"My Grace is sufficient for thee!"*

3. **The Wonder of it all.** Do the math: Out of dozens of army tents containing four to six army-cots each what were the mathematical odds that those words would be written right above my bed ... the very 'odd man out' who has had to seek and find relief from his Heavenly Father?

> *"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*
>
> [2Corinthians12:9KJV].

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Chapter 15

NATURE'S GORGEOUS PALETTE

1. **The Magic of Colour.** God creates a black dairy cow with white patches that grazes on green grass on blue Mondays and later produces sweet, nutritious white milk; the farmer takes the white milk and produces a stock of nutritious and palatable yellow cheese and butter. Confusing, isn't it?

I once heard the anecdote about a little boy's first week in school. Apparently, he came back home on the third day complaining to his mother:

> *"My teacher is crazy. On Monday she said 4 plus 1 equal 5; today she again said that 2 plus 3 equal 5! I'm not going back until she has made up her mind."*

Is the Creator also being inconsistent with science? No, on the contrary ... the Creator is the consummate artist-scientist who skilfully uses colour, light and matter with which to enrich our lives.

2. **The Cosmos.** When one steps aside and look up to the night-sky with stars glittering like diamonds on black velvet and majestic galaxies draped like chandeliers from a celestial ceiling one stands amazed at the sight of such indescribable majesty and beauty.

As C.S. Lewis has said, we know that the sun exists not necessarily because we can see the sun but because by it we can see everything else; we likewise know that God exists not because we can necessarily see Him but by Him we can see everything else, i.e., the galaxies, stars, solar system, planets, moons,

beautiful moonlit evenings graced by the aroma of honeysuckle and orange-blossom ... and the gorgeous autumn palette of nature.

3. **Why we appreciate beauty.** There probably are many reasons why we appreciate beauty (which, as some say, is in the eye of the beholder) that scientists probably have cognitively researched. Be that as it may, I have a hunch that:

3.1 We probably appreciate and enjoy beauty because we are created in the image of God who surely is the ultimate *Master of the Arts,* especially music and the visual arts.

3.2 Although our physical body is from the earth, our spirit has had its origin in God who had given it in the first place, as the Bible teaches:

> *"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."*
>
> [Ecclesiastes12:7KJV].

Maybe we enjoy beauty and inwardly rejoice, spiritually, when we see magnificent scenery also because we, at the sight of rare beauty, are intuitively (spiritually) reminded of the beauty of Paradise, i.e., we simply (subconsciously, primordially) miss the green, green grass of Eden and of our Heavenly home!

4. **The Throne of God.** This surely will be the ultimate beauty anyone could ever hope to behold:

> *"To him that overcometh will I [JESUS] grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne ... And immediately I [JOHN] was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.*

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."

[Revelation3:21; 4:2-3KJV].

5. **The Ultimate Divine 'Alchemy'.** This invitation and promise (by the God who 'cannot lie') in the magical domain of creating beauty with colour stillstands:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool ... But if we walk in the light, as he [JESUS] is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

[Isaiah1:18; 1John1:7KJV].

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Chapter 16

NOT GOOD ENOUGH? JOIN THE CLUB!

1. **Not Good Enough.** By the early 1990s I had arrived at that juncture in my life where I was convinced that I was not good enough for Heaven, or for that matter, not good enough for God's mercy, forgiveness and friendship at all; maybe it was the old *'Accuser of the brethren'* at work again.

2. **Not Deserving?** The point is that it took me some time to learn that, had anyone of us been 'good enough' to be forgiven or to deserve Heaven at all, the whole idea of Christ's vicarious death (substitutionary sacrifice) would have fallen flat on the ground.

In other words, Christ did not die for us because our species was worth dying for, but to *make* us worth dying for! Now that He has died for us, the price paid at *Golgotha ('Calvary')* for the divinely redeemed was simply too high to now let us go at the drop of the proverbial hat.

3. **The dynamics of 'Double Ownership'.** Jesus Christ (as our Creator) once did *(i) own us legitimately;* only to *(ii) lose us at Eden* and then *(ii) to redeem (repurchase) us by the Blood of the Cross* to now (legally) own us twice over:

- He was the *rightful original 'Manufacturer-Creator'* of mankind in the first place.

- He is the *rightful Redeemer* of mankind in the second place now that ransom for us at Golgotha was paid.

Jesus Christ has, as it were, raided the dens of Satan, the most notorious human-trafficker in all of history, and rescued us from the pawnshops of apostasy, disobedience and ignorance to rightfully own us 'twice-over' today.

This is what makes the Christian (for Jesus) worth not only dying for but also living for, i.e., the *Law of Double Ownership.* In principle, *Mercy* is always shown (when it is shown) to the very kind of people who are 'not good enough', and not to saints (who probably won't any longer need it).

Jesus, the ultimate Physician, has, by His own admission, come for the sick and the needy, i.e., those 'not good enough' ... not for the healthy who wouldn't need it (that is to say, if there ever were such people at all).

4. **Sin, Righteousness and Judgment.** Now, few things are as resented today as the Holy Spirit's ministry to convict (reprove) the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John16:8). While the idea probably may make most vacillating Christians nervous, jittery and uneasy, it, however, makes atheists plain livid ... they just detest the news of *Heaven & Salvation vs. Hell and Damnation;* of *repentance vs. disobedience/unbelief.*

> *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."*
>
> [John16:7-11KJV].

5. **The Greatest Compliment in the Cosmos.** Now, whether the reader is a sworn atheist or just a double-minded Christian, to be *confronted by God and admonished (even chastised) with the ultimatum to repent or perish* should never be construed as an insult or an affront; it is meant as a compliment. The real insult would be if God were to ignore us completely! God will not waste His time on rotten apples; when He thus confronts us with ultimatums of *repent or die* it is because He considers us salvageable, i.e., worth repairing and saving and that He loves us and has high hopes for us.

Do the math: If we were not totally expendable but (on the contrary) important enough for God's august and learned Heavenly Courts Of Absolute & Infinite Justice to actually make the time to sit for judicial liberations about us in order to consider us for Hell, then (as that pastor of pastors, Alvin Rogness, has so aptly written) we may just as well be considered important enough for His august and learned Heavenly Courts of Absolute & Infinite Justice to make time to sit for judicial deliberations about us in order to consider us for Heaven too. The Bible says:

> *"For I know the purposes which I am purposing for you, says Jehovah; purposes of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."*
>
> [Jeremiah29:11MKJV].
>
> "*For consider him [JESUS CHRIST] that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*
>
> *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

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"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

[Hebrews12:3-11KJV].

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Chapter 17

SIGNIFICANT WORK IS HEAVEN

1. **Covid-19 Pandemic.** Judging from the avalanche of objections to this pandemic-driven lockdown, I am convinced that work is, proverbially speaking, 'heaven'.

I say so because very few people are able to live without the honour, personal significance, purpose and the sustainable income, whether from a fulltime job, career and profession, or from a viable business, that work can generate. Few things are as debilitatingly demoralising and discouraging as to fall victim to company downsizing, retrenchment, dismissal or personal bankruptcy, liquidation and sequestration ... I speak from personal experience gathered in the 'University of Adversity'.

2. **The Man who dreamed of Heaven.** A man (who wishes to remain anonymous) once shared this story:

> *"I dreamed of Heaven last night. I was standing on a high, green hill heavily covered in fog when the mist slowly began to lift, opening up a majestic vista of this enormously large valley that seemed to stretch for miles on end in all directions into all infinity; in fact, I couldn't make out a horizon of any kind at all!*
>
> *"I was standing high above the valley which, far down below, was replete with gorgeous vineyards, orchards and luscious fields of grain as far as the eyes could see. The most remarkable aspect of the sight was the echoing din of millions of voices rising in an excited chatter, laughter and joyful labour in these fields, orchards and vineyards.*

> *"As there apparently was no such thing as 'fatigue' in Heaven, 'work' (labour) appeared to be great fun, even ecstatically so, there. The sight was so strikingly beautiful that I fell backward into the arms of an angel, shrieking, not in terror but in total shock at the breath taking majesty of the sight."*

Years later I read the story of a spiritual leader in the United States that, uncannily, had had the same dream with the only difference that the 'chaperoning' angel had told him that the millions of ecstatic and happy voices he had had heard labouring far down below were the voices of those he had won for Christ over his lifetime ... now how can working for Jesus get any better than that?

3. **Work is Heaven.** The anecdote is also shared of another man who, after he had dreamt he had arrived in 'Heaven', in the dream reportedly was so overcome by the beauty of the lush paradise that he, after a few leisurely days, decided to present himself to the angels for work ... 'any kind of work'.

After they had declined all his offers to serve (in the beautiful estate with its magnificent palaces and gardens) because 'all the available positions were already filled', he went to the Superintendent of the facility and told him that, would he ever have as much as a second chance to consider his options again, he would never ask for 'Heaven' again, to which the Superintendent replied, *"What makes you think you are in Heaven?"* Hell is to feel worthless, useless, unwanted; significant work, on the other hand, is Heaven!

I have a hunch that, in Heaven, citizens are going to work hard and be creative, industrious and remarkably responsible and productive, but, having said that, with the added bonus that in Heaven, instead of being exhausting and enervating, work is going to be therapeutic, exhilarating, interesting, fun, energising and rewarding in more ways than we can ever imagine today.

4. **I tell you a secret.** When the Apostle Paul (we assume it was Paul) returned from his 'night out' (vision) of Paradise (the Third Heaven) he wrote:

> **"***Indeed, it is not profitable for me to boast. For I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ fourteen years before (whether in the body, I do not know; or outside of the body, I do not know; God knows) such a one was caught up to the third Heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or outside of the body, I do not know; God knows), that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not allowed for a man to utter."*
>
> [2Corinthians12:1-4MKJV].

He had also earlier written:

> *"And I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I speak a mystery to you; we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in a glance of an eye, at the last trumpet. For a trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and when this mortal shall put on immortality, then will take place the word that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory ..."*"
>
> [1Corinthians15:50-54MKJV].

So, what is the great secret? The secret is that, judging from Jesus Christ's parable of the servants who had received the talents from their master and who were later rewarded with oversight over cities commensurate with their production prowess there will be no unemployment, joblessness and homelessness in

Heaven; no bankruptcies, retrenchments and dismissals ... work (whatever our 'vocation') will be Heaven!

> *"For it is as if a man going abroad called his own servants and gave them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to each according to his ability. And he went abroad at once. And going he who had received the five talents traded with them, and made another five talents.*
>
> *"And likewise he who had received two, he also gained another two. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the earth and hid his lord's silver. After a long time the lord of those servants came and took account with them.*
>
> *"And so he who had received five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, Lord, you delivered five talents to me. Behold, I have gained five talents above them. His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. He also who had received two talents came and said, Lord, you delivered two talents to me. Behold, I have gained two other talents above them.*
>
> *"His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. And he who had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew that you were a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter. And I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the earth. Lo, you have yours.*
>
> *"His lord answered and said to him, Evil and slothful servant! You knew that I reaped where I did not sow, and gathered where I did not scatter, then you should have put my money to the exchangers, and coming I would have received my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him and give it to him who has ten talents.*
>
> *"For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will abound. But from him who has not, even that which he has shall be taken away from him. And throw the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*
>
> [Matthew25:14-30MKJV].

5. **Our duty on earth.** Our duty while on earth is simple:

"Do not lay up treasures on earth for yourselves, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up treasures in Heaven for yourselves, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings out good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings out evil things."

"'Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which when a man has found it, he hides it, and for the joy of it goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field."

"Then He said to them, Therefore every scribe who is instructed to the kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a householder, who brings out things new and old out of his treasure."

[Matthew6:19-21; 12:35; 13:44,52MKJV].

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth the good. And an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth the evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.'"

"So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.'"

"Sell what you have and give alms. Make for yourselves purses which do not become old, an unfailing treasure in Heaven, where no thief comes nor moth corrupts. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

[Luke6:45; 12:21,33,34MKJV].

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Chapter 18

SO, YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE ONLY A ZERO GOING NOWHERE?

1. **Nothing but a round red Zero?** As a teenager during the 1960s, and, later as a young adult, I sometimes used to hear people suffering from the proverbial 'bad hair day' lament, *"Today I feel as useless as a big red round zero on a contract!"*

It has taken a man like Henry Grady Weaver, former head of 'Customer Research' for the *General Motors Corporation,* to help me rethink my assessment of the mysterious little circle we call a 'zero'.

Apparently, the *Saracens,* probably having borrowed the idea from the Hindus, invented the 'zero' without which they say *science* would hardly exist. About the 'Saracens':

> *"Saracens (/ˈsærəsən/) were primarily Arab Muslims, but also Turks or other Muslims as referred to by Christian writers in Europe during the Middle Ages. The term's meaning evolved during its history. In the early centuries of the Christian Era, Greek and Latin writings used the term to refer to the people who lived in desert areas in and near the Roman province of Arabia Petraea, and in Arabia Deserta. In Europe during the Early Middle Ages, the term came to be associated with tribes of Arabia. The oldest known source mentioning Saracens in relation to Islam dates to the 7th century. It was found in Doctrina Jacobi, a commentary that discussed the Muslim conquest of the Levant."*
>
> [Wikipedia].

In the world of meticulous calculations, the ciphers and decimal points of the decimal system were eventually found to be far superior to the clumsy Roman numerals and other systems used in old times elsewhere in the world. According to Weaver, having established the concept of *zero,* the Saracens then developed arithmetic & algebra including quadratics and added plane & spherical geometry plus trigonometry to Euclid's geometry.

The Saracens also developed astronomy and built observatories across three continents to study the heavens. Henry G. Weaver writes that, without *zero,* there probably would be no mathematics and no engineering, chemistry or astronomy i.e., no adequate measurement of substance, time or space.

Without *zero,* there would for instance be no skyscrapers, subways, modern bridges, automobiles, or radios, rayon, cellophane, aluminium (U.S. 'aluminum'), electric refrigeration or atomic power etc.

Without *zero,* there would be no modern science, no modern world. Take a calculator and try to make mathematical calculations without the *zero* in most decimal equations and you're probably lost.

2. **Even God used the 'Decimal System' when He spoke to the prophets of old.** Even the so-called 'dead', 'evil', 'cruel', 'obsolete', old-fashioned' (according to atheists) God of the Bible already (millenniums ago!) have been applying the superbly streamlined *decimal system* when He commanded,

> *"And all the tithe* of the land, of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is Jehovah's. It is holy to Jehovah. You shall truly tithe all the increase of your seed that the field brings forth year by year."*
>
> [Leviticus27:30; Deuteronomy14:22MKJV].

*Tithe: A 'tithe' is one-tenth (10%).

3. **In God's eyes we're all precious.** There are no 'zeros' among God's people: From the person with the proverbial 'ten talents' through the one with 'six talents' right down to the one with only 'one talent' in God's eyes we're all precious. The Bible teaches:

> *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*
>
> [1Peter1:18KJV].
>
> *"Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."*
>
> [Proverbs3:5-6MKJV].

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Chapter 19

SO, YOU WANT TO BE A STAR?

1. **Introduction.** I grew up in a bustling little mining village situated on one of the richest gold reefs, the *Witwatersrand Main Reef,* in South Africa ... our house a brisk 10-minute walk away from a picturesque lake fringed by a modest forest of eucalyptus, ancient poplar, pine and a variety of other trees and where I have spent many hours as a toddler learning to swim and later playing in the forest as a boy, sometimes just sitting at a stream staring for (the proverbial) 'hours' at a time at raindrops dripping from branches and running down the bark to freshen up the fragrant mulch from years of autumn leaves shed to the forest floor.

I carved out my initials on the same ancient eucalyptus trees where my father as a boy my age had carved out his initials decades earlier during the Depression years of the 1930s.

2. **Zane Grey & Louis L'Amour.** Now, my parents were not Church-going people, but the fondest gift my dad left me was his love for, among other things, reading Zane Grey and Louis L' Amour, and watching mostly cowboy-westerns (films).

I grew up with 'household' names like Burn 'Em Up Barnes, Charles Starrett, Gene Autrey, Roy Rogers, Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Glenn Ford, Audie Murphy ('the most decorated soldier of WW2'), John Wayne, Robert Taylor, Robert Mitchum, Joel McCrea, Randolph Scott, Cary Grant, Kerwin Matthews, Sean Connery, Richard Widmark, Michael Rennie, Vincent Price, Basil Rathbone, James Stewart, Alan Ladd, Stewart Granger, Roy Rogers, Charles Starrett, Yul Brunner, Steve Reeves (Hercules), Johnny Weissmuller, Lex Barker & Gordon Scott and the giant Clint Walker etc.

3. **The girls.** Like so many other boys my age I also stared wide-eyed at the antics and exploits of these 'brave' men in the face of so many dangers in the 'Wild West', and always at their side were the 'brave' women backing them up, e.g., Katy Jurado, Dorothy Malone, Rhonda Fleming, Lana Turner, Julie Adams, Debbie Reynolds, Doris Day, Julie Adams, Olivia de Havilland, Merle Oberon, Carroll Baker etc.

4. **Music.** I still marvel at the phenomenal success over the years of artists like Al Jolson, Ed Ames, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Lee Liberace, Roger Williams, Bing Crosby, Robert Goulet, Jerry Vale, Jim Reeves, Matt Monro, Andy Williams, Nat King Cole and female vocalists like Della Reese, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Shirley Bassey, Connie Francis, Karen Carpenter, Rosemary Clooney, Dinah Shore, Vera Lynn etc.

During the 1970s we went to see a Liberace show on at least two occasions (Johannesburg); other artists I can recall were Trini Lopez, Victor Borge, James Last etc. During the 1990s Frank Sinatra performed at Sun City about 100 kilometres from our home in the Bushveldt ... regrettably I was not able to attend. Also, during the 1960s I missed out on the Gunther Kallmann Choir's performance from inside South Africa's cavernous Cango Caves.

Jim Reeves loved South Africa and even made a film here, i.e., 'Kimberley Jim', all about the 19th century diamond rush at Kimberley. Jim paid us the priceless compliment of recording a LP-record with a selection of songs in the local 'Afrikaans' language, my mother tongue (Google: 'Jim Reeves, Afrikaans songs, You Tube'). South Africans still miss him sorely.

5. **Sports.** During the 1950s two boxers who stood out in our country and who we boys used to admire, were Mike

Holt (Light-heavyweight) and the 7'2" (218,4 cm.) Ewert Potgieter (Heavyweight).

Later in life, a 'south-paw' from Pretoria going by the name of Hottie van Heerden also started carving out a niche for himself. One day, while picking up a conversation with a stranger (an old man and a boxing enthusiast) at a shopping centre in Pretoria in connection with our boxing history, I eventually was surprised to learn that the softspoken, kind-hearted gentleman (probably a marvellous grandfather too!) that I was speaking with was none other than the famous Hottie van Heerden himself.

In boxing South Africa has produced some world champions e.g., Vic Toweel. Gerrie Coetzee and Brian Mitchell. Both Johnny du Plooy and Corrie Sanders were exciting boxers; Sanders once knocked out Wladimir Klitschko after only two rounds ... At the time a 'major upset' in world boxing. Sadly, Sanders was murdered in South Africa by two illegal aliens from Zimbabwe while sitting in a restaurant with his family.

In my opinion the boxer with the best manners and public graces ever was Pierre Coetzer whom I met at the firm I was working at the time in Randburg (Johannesburg); Pierre was an athlete in the true Spartan and Olympian sense of the word ... disciplined, dedicated and focused, and it has taken no less than the formidable George Foreman to end his career a number of years ago. His discipline from years of training in the Police services shows through in his regal bearing.

Famous wrestlers were Percy Hall, Manie Maritz, the Wild Man from the Kalahari, Willlie Liebenberg and Jan Wilkens. In golf we had Bobby Locke and Gary Player, etc.

During my boyhood days of the 1950s we also used to collect these little cards from 'lucky packets', i.e., photos of our heroes of the day, similar to those sought-after baseball cards.

6. **So you want to be a STAR?** It is not wrong to have dreams, aspirations, ambition ... most people who have tasted success probably have had role models to emulate along the way, i.e.,

not only movie stars but 'heroes' from politics, sports, big business, medicine, science or even their own sisters, brothers, fathers and mothers ... you name it. A cousin of mine and a namesake could, as a schoolboy of 18, run the *one mile* in 4 min. 32 seconds during the early 1960s and was our local high-school hero for years. Sadly, in 1966 he died from *leukaemia* (cancer of the body's blood-forming tissues).

Let me tell you a secret; all those stars I have mentioned have had to grow old, wither and die. A favourite singer of mine, Vera Lynn (103), died in June 2020 and actress Olivia de Havilland, star from 'Gone with the Wind', at 104 only days ago in July (2020). Even two of Christendom's great 'heroes', if I must put it bluntly, have had to die: Billy Graham at the age of 99 and George Beverly Shea at 104.

You may remember Bev Shea as Billy Graham's campaign soloist ... music truly keeps one young! Bev Shea is the man who has had to choose between a lucrative secular job (in which he probably would have excelled) and working for Jesus Christ ... he chose working full-time for Jesus Christ. He is also the man who made famous the song:

'I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold; I'd rather be His than have riches untold!'

7. **I show you a 'more excellent way'.** Don't let people tell you it is wrong to pursue a career in the secular field ... most of us have had to acquire and hold down a '8 to 5 day-job' of some sorts to stick to for years; not everybody was cut out to be a world-famous evangelist, missionary or TV-preacher.

Besides, whose tithes and financial contributions are going to keep churches alive and missionaries in the field without hardworking railway porters, janitors, teachers, engineers, scientists, doctors, bank clerks, business managers, captains of industry, journalists, writers, publishers, academics, professors, nurses, computer programmers, website developers, marketing

gurus, insurance salespeople, real estate agents etc? The Bible nevertheless teaches:

> *"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."*
>
> [1Corinthians12:31KJV].

True stardom lies in something far greater, grander and glamorous than what Hollywood or the worlds of sports and big business on their best day can ever offer ... *by winning souls for Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God, whether full-time or part-time.* The Bible has promised:

> *"And those who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the sky; and those who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever."*
>
> [Daniel 12:3MKJV].

This will be true stardom!

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Chapter 20

THE ANATOMY OF HYPOCRISY

1. **Army woes.** On 4 January 1966, at the age of 18, I was formally conscripted into the army of my country after having earlier (during 1965) been drafted into the military police regiment of my future brigade.

As I am not a 'herd animal' by nature, the reader can imagine the discomfort I have to suffer as a rookie in 'that man's army'. Our barracks were old, derelict (albeit still quite functional) architectural 'dinosaurs' from World War 2 with their red corrugated-iron roofs and worn wooden (plank) floors.

My grandfather on my mother's side has served as a military policeman in North Africa during WW2 and it was not entirely impossible that he may have been quartered up in those self-same barracks about 25 years earlier at the age of 33 on his way to fight the 'Desert Fox', General Erwin Rommel.

2. **The rebel.** As conscripts the rules for rookies like us were very strict and we were thoroughly drilled in them almost daily. However, after only a few weeks into basic training a fellow conscript by the name of 'VanE' (an alias) was suddenly discovered on AWOL (absent without leave or permission) one afternoon.

He was duly apprehended, arrested, brought back for a disciplinary hearing, and eventually was sentenced to a lengthy term in the detention barracks, an army 'correctional facility' for recalcitrant troops in breach of army regulations, and, in his case, the breach of regulations on at least five counts:

- Absent without 'leave' (without permission).

- He was wearing a 'civilian outfit' (not allowed for conscript-rookies even on a 'legal pass').

- He had 'borrowed' (read 'stolen') an army jeep.

- He was, at the time, only in possession of a civilian driver's license but not the regulatory 'military' one required for driving *'official R-registered vehicles'.*

- He was apprehended in a 'public bar' in Pretoria (the drinking of hard liquor was unlawful for conscripted rookies during the basic training period).

3. **The shock.** At the time I marvelled at VanE's stupidity and lack of restraint, now probably long since forgotten by the army, but later in life I began to realise that my own accumulated indiscretions, moral failures, sins and plain stupidities over the years probably would have eclipsed his by far, and today I realise how my own hypocrisy have damaged my life and career and also have hurt others, some of them family and dear friends. It is not fun when we begin to mature only to learn and discover the ugly and treacherous hypocrisies in ourselves.

Sadly, it sometimes takes many years, even decades, to develop the type of maturity to realise the impact of one's own behaviour and ghastly 'radio-active nuclear fall-out' of such moral and social failings. So, regrets are many and only today at an advanced age do I fully understand and appreciate the words of C.S. Lewis that read:

"The more we obey our conscience the more our conscience will demand of us."

Learning to obey the conscience and the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit remains a tough, uphill learning curve ... but thank God for Jesus Christ!

"These things I [JESUS] have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I [JESUS] have overcome the world."

[John16:33KJV].

Do the math: Would He (Jesus Christ) who had preached and admonished us to forgive *seventy times seven* (on one single day) those who trespassed against us, then turn around and fail to forgive us when we come to Him for forgiveness?

Chapter 21

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF GRATITUDE

1. **The Scourge of Adversity.** Also referred to as *'The University of Hard Knocks'* or *'The University of Adversity',* maybe we should learn not to take such a dim view of adversity. I think it was Charles Spurgeon who has said that, provided we prevailed, God was able to redeem *time, tears and trouble;* even when *four days late* (as with the death of Lazarus) He could still be in time.

2. **Quotes on Suffering & Insecurity.** Some useful quotes:

2.1 *"A ship in port is safe, but that's not what ships are built for."*
[Dale Carnegie].

2.2 *"The more you do, the more you fail. The more you fail, the more you learn. The more you learn, the better you get."*
[John Maxwell].

2.3 *"If your God is mighty enough to ignite the sun, could it be that He is mighty enough to light your path? Stay strong! Your test will yet become your testimony, your mess will yet become your message."*
[Max Lucado].

2.4 *"If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well. If it is worth having, it is worth waiting for. If it is worth attaining, it is worth fighting for. If it is worth experiencing, it is worth putting aside time for."*
[Oscar Wilde].

3. **The Tragedy of Selfishness.** Sometimes we can be so self-absorbed in our problems, adversity and suffering that we completely forget the pain of those around us. Wrote Martin Niemöller about the WW2 days of the Nazi scourge:

"First they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me."

[Martin Niemöller, 1892-1984]

P.S. Martin Niemöller survived the concentration camps, but Dietrich Bonhoeffer didn't.

4. **A lesson in Gratitude.** Jesus never forgot to say, 'thank you'. The Bible says:

4.1 *"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."*
[Matthew11:25KJV].

4.2 *"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves ... And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."*

[Luke22:17,19KJV].

4.3 *"And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would."*
[John6:11KJV].

4.4 *"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."*
[John11:41KJV].

5. **The Apostle Paul & Gratitude.** The Apostle Paul admonishes believers to be grateful:

5.1 *"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place ... Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."*
[2Corinthians2:14; 9:15KJV].

5.2 *"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*
[Ephesians5:20KJV].

6. **Gratitude on 'Death Row'.** Some say that the song of the parakeet in a cage (suffering incarceration) is the sweetest and most melodious of all others.

Languishing on death row on a charge of homicide (manslaughter) and expecting to be executed (however reprieved after four years in prison) the prolific South African writer, Herman Charles Bosman (1905-1951) once wrote:

"Tho' my heart is bruised and riven;
Tho' my soul is scathed with scars –
Yet I've touched the fringe of heaven ...
I've lived among the stars!"

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Chapter 22

THE ART OF COMMON SENSE

1. **Options.** Sooner or later most people are confronted with the choice to either *(i) believe in God and accept the Bible at face value* or, as atheists and secular humanists recommend *(ii) reject faith in God and respect for the Bible outright as irrelevant, obsolete traditions from a bygone era.* C.S. Lewis is reported to have said:

> *"There are only two kinds of people, i.e., those who say to God, 'Thy will be done!' and those to whom God must say, 'Okay then ... have it your way!' "*

2. **World War 2 and the Nazi Regime.** In his book, *'Inside the Third Reich'*, Albert Speer tells the story of how Adolf Hitler used to lament:

> *"Either I am going to win this war, or I am going to lose it!"*

Those words, perhaps profound in the ears of a few subservient Nazi minions, said nothing that everybody did not know already. One of his staff members, maybe the secretary, could (in such moments) even summon the courage to retort with a sarcastic,

> *"Either it's going to rain, or it is not going to rain!"* (And actually, get away with it!).

It may have sounded better had he said it instead like this:

"If I am not going to win this war, I probably am going to lose it ...!"

See how little sense he made? He lost the war, all right, despite his assessment of a mighty 50/50 chance of success.

3. **Decision-making challenges.** I am adamant that responsible decision-making for devout Christians, especially i.r.o. a decision that determine where one should spend Eternity after dying, is almost impossible without reading and having a thorough working knowledge (but not necessarily supported by advanced degrees in theology as mandatory) of the Bible.

Whereas the unbeliever will e.g.,

(i) probably worry and act instinctively to decide on a matter,

(ii) the prayerful, studious and well-informed Christian will invariably pray (instead of worry) and act intuitively (instead of acting instinctively).

The question remains: Why do we always have enough time to worry but never enough time to pray? The difference between the two could be summarised as follows:

3.1 Atheist, skeptic & immature Christian:

"Why pray if I can worry?"

3.2 Mature Christian:

"Why worry if I can pray?"

The 'intuition' referred to will probably founded on years of Bible reading and study, prayer, hours of intercession and

faithful devotion to the Gospel with fond memories of the lifesaving *Providence of God* in times of troubles and trials.

4. **God's Promise.** God (our Heavenly Father) has promised His child:

> *"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."*
>
> [Psalm50:15KJV].

Jesus Christ has taught us the world's most exciting acronym, i.e., 'ASK':

A [sk]
S [eek]
K [nock]

> *"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*
>
> [Luke11:9KJV].

5. **The Art of Common Sense.** My advice to the reader confronted by the dilemma described in the first paragraph:

> It is more prudent and always infinitely wiser to (i) accept the Bible and faith in God at face value until someone proves the contrary, than to (ii) reject the Bible and faith in God outright until someone proves the contrary (not a good idea!).

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Chapter 23

THE BROKEN HEART

1. **It's no joke.** A broken heart is no joke, but, despite the 'negative press' on broken hearts, there may be light in the tunnel for those with this problem after all. Serving out four years on 'death row' in South Africa during the early 1940s, and as mentioned, earlier, South Africa's most prolific writer of his era once wrote:

"Tho' my heart is bruised and riven;
Tho' my soul is scathed with scars ...
Yet, I've touched the fringe of heaven;
I've lived among the stars."

[Herman Charles Bosman, 1905-1951]

2. **Christ may enter through the door of a broken heart.** A famous British playwright once wrote:

"Ah! happy day they whose hearts can break
and peace of pardon win!
How else may man make straight his plan
and cleanse his soul from Sin?
How else but through a broken heart
may Lord Christ enter in?"

[Oscar Wilde, 1854-1900]

3. **Enters the Pearl of Great Price.** Many a broken and lonely heart has come for incomparable, priceless consolation from

the *Good Shepherd, the Rock of Ages and Pearl of Great Price,* Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ, or Anointed One); even members from non-Christian faiths are increasingly witnessing to the fact of Jesus Christ appearing to them in visions and dreams to comfort them in their most anxious, desperate and lonely hour and to bless them with the gifts of *Mercy, Grace and Favour* from the Heart of God. Those with a broken heart really are in good company; the Bible says:

> *"Jehovah is near to the broken hearted; and saves those who are of a contrite spirit ... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."*
> [Psalm34:18; 51:17MKJV].

The Bible also promises the ultimate prize in Eternity for those (regardless of current religious affiliation, including atheists) with a broken heart who, I must add, today come to Jesus Christ to repent and for consolation and help:

> *"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."*
> [Revelation21:3-6KJV].

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Chapter 24

THE DIVINE GIFT OF VULNERABILITY

1. **The Scourge of Panic Attacks.** I am no stranger to panic attacks, my first in 1957 when I dreamed where I was returning home from school (Grade 5) only to find the house empty; in the dream our parents had absconded and left us.

The second time was in 1984 waking up in the middle of the night, a father of two young children and with the dread of the uncertainty of life and the future of my family hanging over my head like the proverbial 'sword of Damocles'.

2. **The Innocence and Naiveté of Childhood.** Born in 1947, I grew up in the 'roaring forties', 'feisty fifties' & 'sexy sixties', the son of a mineworker (and later, shop owner and merchant) as the eldest of six children; the second-eldest having died only 4 days after birth.

As alluded to before, growing up on the West Rand 'goldfields' of Johannesburg's famous 'Witwatersrand' ('White Waters Ridge'), i.e. the richest gold reef in the world at the time, we boys, just like our fathers had done before us, spent our time at a quaint (about 10 000 square metres) and picturesque lake surrounded by a forest of poplars, pine and eucalyptus, and scaling the monstrous white mine dumps of the *Randfontein Estates Mine Co.* while on weekends swimming in the large, boisterous and heated waters of *'Robinson Lake',* the then *'Riviera of the West Rand'.*

During summer evenings my father & mother used to load our baby brother into a rickety perambulator with the two of us (the eldest) running alongside, to take long leisurely strolls 'around

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town', and, at that age (about 6), the frightfully high stars in the blackest of rural skies and twinkling to the rhythm of noisy crickets, used to scare the wits out of me ... such majesty (probably my personalised version of 'prairie fever') was simply too much for me to grasp.

My father was not perfect, but I can truthfully say I that I had never seen him inebriated, plain drunk or abusive (he didn't 'drink'). Although we had had many arguments and scuffles and, as a recalcitrant teenager, I had sworn that I would surely not grace his funeral with my royal presence, when he died in 2013 my siblings, my wife, my children and I put together a funeral that even my mother has had to concede as the 'most beautiful' she has ever had the privilege of attending.

What must have pulled us through as children during the innocent post-war 1940s, 1950s and 1960s surely must have been the blissful sensation of vulnerability inside the protection, safety and security afforded by two hardworking 'lower middle-class' parents.

3. **The Divine Gift.** Many people spend a lifetime seeking power, control and the security of absolute self-sufficiency; they scheme, steal, embezzle, rob, scam, collude with tenders, bribe etc. because they have never met nor learnt to trust the Heavenly Father ... they try to make it on their own. But, as the sheep of His pasture, we are perhaps *supposed* to feel vulnerable; that is what a relationship with the Heavenly Father is all about.

In many respects in the daily grind of duty we sometimes may have to (and will be able to) fend for ourselves, but what a bliss to run into the everlasting arms and unchanging hand of the Good Shepherd and Rock of Ages when the going gets tough! His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He is watching me.

> *" ... the rock-badgers are not a mighty people, yet they make their houses in the rock.""*
>
> [Proverbs30:26MKJV].

"Behold the birds of the air; for they sow not, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them; are you not much better than they are? Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin, but I say to you that even Solomon in his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Therefore if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much rather clothe you, little-faiths? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? For the nations seek after all these things. For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things ...

"Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not fear, you are of more value than many sparrows. Then everyone who shall confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father in Heaven."

[Matthew6:26-32; 10:29-33MKJV].

"For everyone who asks receives. And he who seeks finds. And to him who knocks it shall be opened. For what father of you, if the son asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake for a fish? Or if he shall ask for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? ...

"Consider the lilies, how they grow; they do not toil, they do not spin. And yet I say to you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass (which today is in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven) how much more will He clothe you, O little-faiths? And do not seek what you shall eat, nor what you shall drink, and stop being in anxiety.

"For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you have need of these things. But rather seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you."

[Luke11:10-13; 12:27-31MKJV].

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Chapter 25

THE FOUR SEASONS OF LIFE

1. **Introduction.** I am by nature melancholic of temperament, although amiably (and not morbidly) so, and have formulated what appears as FOUR SEASONS in the life of mankind:

1.1 **SPRING.** Traditionally SPRING would be defined as the period spanning the group 1 to 18 years of age.

However, with the increase in life expectancy these days as well as mankind's 'delayed maturity' in a world hellbent on fun and instant gratification, it may, for some people, be more expedient to use the group 1-21 years of age.

During the SPRING season, the world appears still fresh and new, the energy-levels are still high with curiosity overflowing where aromas and scents (with noses as kids) so close to the earth, still fascinate in daily discovery.

How fondly I still remember my first *hand-in-hand* walk in about 1950 in a Brixton (Johannesburg) park with an uncle and the fresh, magic aroma of overgrown 'kikuyu' lawn grasses; or, of the smell and charm of wet tarmac during rainy days on 'old' Johannesburg pavements (sidewalks).

1.2 **SUMMER.** Traditionally the group 19-36 years of age; but, with increased life expectancy and delayed maturity more expedient to choose the group 22-42 years of age.

During the SUMMER season, responsibilities increase; a sense of stewardship begins to develop; a family emerges; careers (hopefully) flourish and bloom. The youthful rebel begins to calm down and relax; knowledge becomes infused with a modest spatter of wisdom and discretion. In tandem with increased maturity problems and challenges increase.

Life has (suddenly) been transformed from a blissful 'situational comedy' into a serious (albeit interesting for the most privileged) 'drama' or 'melo-drama'.

1.3 **AUTUMN.** The group 37-54 years of age or alternatively 43-63 years of age.

During the AUTUMN season, the hair is turning grey, children have left with the 'empty nest syndrome' and nostalgia (for those left behind) kicking in vigorously (and mercilessly) with a vengeance.

1.4 **WINTER.** The group 55-72+ years of age or, alternatively, 64-84+ years of age.

During the WINTER season of life arrives the dissolution of the family with the one funeral after the other; children working and/or living in foreign countries; those ever-present, haunting flashbacks and agonizing memories.

2. **The Blessed Hope.** The Eternal Morning and Day to break, however, is always preceded by an hour darkest just before the Dawn, but the Christian with his or her hopes vested in the promises of a holy God and a sacrificing Saviour is solidly rooted in the Eternal 'SHALOM' blessing of:

- the (i) Fatherhood of God the Father ... beauty for ashes!

- the (ii) Friendship of the Son ... the oil of joy for mourning!

- the (iii) Fellowship of the Holy Spirit ... the garment of praise for a spirit of heaviness!

3. **Benediction.**

"*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."*
[2Corinthians13:14MKJV].

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Chapter 26

THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND

1. **The Miracle of Salvation.** The Bible says:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
[2Corinthians 5:17KJV].

At this juncture I am reminded of the beautiful poem, *'The Touch of the Master's Hand':*

It was battered and scarred and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bid, good folk?" he cried.
"Who'll start the bidding for me?
A dollar, a dollar ... now two ... only two ...
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?

"Three dollars once, three dollars twice,
Going for three" ... but no!
From the room far back a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow.

Then wiping the dust from the old violin
And tightening up the strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet,
As sweet as an angel sings.

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The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said, *"What am I bid for the old violin?"*
As he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars ... and who'll make it two?
Two...two thousand, and who'll make it three?
Three thousand once and three thousand twice;
Three thousand and gone!" said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried
"We do not quite understand ...
What changed it's worth?" Swift came the reply:
" 'Twas the touch of the master's hand."

And many a man with soul out of tune
And battered and scarred by sin
Is auctioned cheap by the thoughtless crowd Just like the old violin.

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine;
A game, and he travels on.
He is 'going once', and 'going twice',
He's 'going' and almost 'gone'.

But the Master comes and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand,
The worth of a soul and the change that's wrought ...
By the touch of the Master's Hand!

(Myra Brooks Welch, 1878-1959)

2. **The Invitation Still Stands.** Jesus invites us:

> *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For*

my yoke is easy, and my burden is light ... I am come a light into the world, that whoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness ... And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world ... And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

[Matthew11:28,29,30; John12:46,47; Revelation22:17KJV].

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Chapter 27

THERE IS LIFE AFTER DEPRESSION

1. **Introduction.** If life could be described in the *four seasons of ages 1-18 (Spring); 19-36 (Summer); 37-54 (Autumn) and 55 > (Winter),* then I have arrived at that juncture where I am in the winter (sunset) season of my life.

It's a free country and the advice I today leave with you, advice culminating from years spent at the *University of Hard Knocks,* are wholly optional; feel free to do with it what you like. Some recommendations:

1.1 **Trust GOD with your Depression.** Depression is quite normal; it is (unfortunately) part of being human. Some cynics say that the first thing that happens when babies are born, is to be slapped to check if they are fitted out with functional tear ducts and whether they can cry; if not, they are sent back to the factory (joke).

Jesus Christ, however, is never depressed, and if He is never depressed, no matter what your condition or how dire your situation, all hope is not lost. Charles Spurgeon is reported to have said (my paraphrasing):

"God is too good to be cruel and too wise to be confused. Even though we cannot always trace God's Hand, we can still trust His Heart."

God wants to give us a hopeful future:

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end"

[Jeremiah29:11KJV].

Jesus has, however, warned against ignorance and complacency about the challenges prevalent in the world:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

[John16:33KJV].

The anecdote is told about the irate client who had stormed into the lawyer's office, highly agitated, red in the face, foaming at the mouth (metaphorically speaking) and shouting abuse at the lawyer who had so scandalously failed him in his case, upon which the lawyer's secretary (bless her soul) then placated her boss with the profound words:

"Don't mind him sir, the man is just trying to cope with the Universe, and let's face it ... it's one heck of a Universe!"

I know crime is rife and that there are some very evil people in the world, but I sincerely believe that most ordinary citizens just want to get on with their lives and put food on the table for their families.

When altercations like the one mentioned above now and then thus happen, it probably is just another case of the poor man (or woman) trying his or her level best to cope with this 'one heck of a Universe' as graciously as possible, although I suspect that some has given up trying completely ... not to not lose their temper but when they do to do so graciously.

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1.2 **Pray for Your Life.** Hardship, adversity, and depression often (if not invariably) may lead us to search God's face and friendship, so pray as if your life depends on it (it does!). God rewards those who believe that He IS (exists) and diligently seek Him:

"*ut without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*"

[Hebrews11:6].

As alluded to earlier, no less a person than Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) once wrote these beautiful words:

"How else but through a broken heart may Lord Christ enter in?""

1.3 **Use a Prayer Journal.** A prayer journal will assist you greatly in 'cementing' your prayers on paper and in writing, thus further bolstering your faith and resolve to persevere over time in supplications to your Heavenly Father.

A prayer journal is not mandatory; God can hear even the flimsiest and fleetest of little prayers (even those we only get to offer as a brief *thought* and not actually as articulated vocally). I have, however, found that a prayer journal containing the structured, premeditated supplications of a sincere soul desperately thirsting for dialogue with the wisest Persona in the Universe endows such desperate intercessors with welcome inspiration and in the end, wisdom. The Bible says:

"He who walks with the wise shall be wise, but a companion with fools shall be destroyed."

[Proverbs13:20MKJV].

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A prayer journal is so magnificently 'official' and 'concrete'; there's just something special about a prayer engraved in the 'cement' of a cheap, A4-counterbook of an ordinary prayer journal ... so totally unassailable and insurmountable by the demons of hell. It elevates prayer, a metaphysical act of faith, to the level of an official *Letter of Proof* penned to an Almighty God ... write your letter to God today!

1.4. **Invest time and effort in sound Nutrition.** Do not underestimate the priceless value of good nutrition. Read good books on the subject, including those of *Adelle Davis* which put a strong emphasis on good food, a balanced diet and especially the role of the *Vitamin B complex* and *Magnesium* in combating clinical depression. Study the subject 'religiously'. To a large extent God has put the 'medicine' or 'therapies' for many of our ailments and diseases in the plants and food we eat.

1.5 **Drop the 'Depresso'.** Beer can, in the long term, sometimes be particularly lethal, although some scientists believe that alcoholism is genetically driven ... conceded, not all habitual beer-drinkers will necessarily become alcoholics.

At the risk of sounding legalistic (I am not) I can, however, say with great confidence that persons who do not drink beer at all will certainly not become addicted beer drinkers.

Be that as it may, even among habitually sober and sensible people beer will, over time, affect the liver adversely and probably cause and/or aggravate depression; anyone even remotely acquainted with the hell of alcoholism (as I am with a history of alcoholism in my family circle) in the family knows about the terrible scourge of drunkenness and the plight of the derelict drunk suffering from so-called 'incurable alcoholism'.

If the reader has such a problem, drop any alcohol and/or drug abuse and avoid bars/pubs as soon as yesterday, if not

indeed sooner. Get professional help expeditiously, and I don't say it disparagingly; I have seen the damage alcohol can do and am not ashamed to warn my fellow human being in advance. The *best* thing I can say on behalf of chronic alcoholism is that it is hell-on-earth; the worst thing I will not even mention. A wise man once wrote this about the 'BAR' (Pub, Saloon, Shebeen etc.):

"A bar to Heaven and a door to Hell; Whoever named it, named it well!"

2. **The Promise of the Master.** Jesus Christ has invited in no uncertain terms:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

[Matthew11:28-30KJV].

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

[John10:10KJV].

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

[Revelation22:16-17KJV].

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Chapter 28

WATERS OF LIFE

1. **The Author of Life.** One of the many names (appellations) of Jesus Christ is *'Prince of Life'.* The Apostle Peter to the Jews implicated in the death of Jesus Christ:

> *"And you killed the Prince of Life, whom God has raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses."*
>
> [Acts3:15MKJV].

(P.S. 'PRINCE': Gk. *'Archēgos': Author, Captain, Chief leader).*

2. **David's cry in the wilderness.**

> *"As the hart [DEER] panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"*
>
> [Psalm42:1-2KJV].

And, after having been comforted, David could write:

> *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."*
>
> [Psalm23:1b-2KJV].

3. **The Children of Israel in the wilderness.** Long before David the Jews have already learned that God could produce water in the wilderness:

"Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters."

[Psalm114:8KJV].

4. **Enters the Prince of Life.** The evergreen, immutable promise from the Prince of Life:

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water [FROM 'JACOB'S WELL'] shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

[John4:13-14KJV].

This invitation issued in the days when Jesus of Nazareth walked the dusty roads of Bethsaida, Capernaum, Nazareth & Jerusalem, remarkably still stands unchanged after 2000+ years:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

[Matthew11:28KJV].

The Apostle John, eking out a living in exile on the *Island of Patmos,* had this vision of the New World:

"For the Lamb [JESUS CHRIST] which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes".
[Revelation7:17].

"'Jesus Christ says: 'It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end ... I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely'."

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[Revelation21:6a; 22:1,17KJV].

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Chapter 29

WHAT EVERY BOY AND GIRL SHOULD KNOW

1. **Growing old.** Strange as it may seem, young people (and children) appear to grow older at a much faster rate than older (and old) people! For instance:

- a 30-year-old father (in the year 2020) with a 1-year-old baby son would be exactly *30 times (30 x 1)* older than his baby son.

- Thirty years from now, i.e., in the year 2050, the father will, at the age of 60, suddenly only be *2 times (twice: 30 x2)* as old as his 30-year-old son.

- By the year 2080, the father will be 90 years old and by then only *one-and-a-half times (30 x 1.5)* older than his 60-years old son.

2. **Debriefing.** What has happened? It would appear as if the pace of growing older has been picking up and accelerating all the time for the child and slowing down for the father!

However, I have only said this 'satirically' in teasing ... because in real life things don't really work that way, i.e., that is not how differences in ages are normally calculated or perceived; we'd rather use addition and subtraction (not multiplication) instead.

The point is that time flies for everyone, and before we know it, the babies are all at college or married with kids of their own; ask any father and mother with a kid away and college and they

will share with you the sweet pain of the empty bed of a parent suffering from 'empty nest syndrome' for the first time.

In my case, we have one child (our eldest son) who is a *projects-engineer and manager* (Pretoria, South Africa) with four kids of his own; another, our only daughter, is a full-time *executive pastor* away in Belgium (after a 5-year stint as a *full-time missionary* in Marseille, France); our 'firstborn' is already in Heaven with the LORD.

Regrets? Many. This I should have done from my earliest childhood, i.e., *fear God, read the Bible, pray, and follow Jesus Christ.* Choose life ... choose Jesus!

This is what every boy and girl in the world should be taught from the day they can speak:

> *"For You are my hope, O Lord God, my trust from my youth. O God, You have taught me from my youth ... Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days do not come, nor the years draw near when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them."*
>
> [Psalm 71:5, 17b; Ecclesiastes 12:1MKJV].

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Chapter 30

'WHAT-IFS' THAT OFTEN PLAGUE YOUNG CHRISTIANS

1. What-if #1: "What if the Bible is not true?"

The alternative to the Biblical worldview is Atheism. If the Bible were not true, you'd have to settle for some form of ungodly Atheism, and there are as many forms ('brands') of atheism as there are models of cellphones or colours lipstick. Some confused Christians even compromise by becoming 'Christian atheists' (with one leg in Christianity and one leg in Atheism!).

Just bear in mind that Atheism has never been proved right (true) and the Bible has never been proved wrong (untrue); that is why it is still with us as the world's bestseller of all times ... according to some reports 100 million copies of the Bible are sold worldwide annually.

Bear in mind that there probably are few true atheists in the world; a 'true atheist' being one who will never cry out (to God) for mercy ... not even on his deathbed. The rest, i.e., those who do repent in their last hour, all the time probably were all only 'wannabe atheists', but eventually wiser (and luckier) nevertheless.

2. What-if #2: "What if Adam never existed?"

You are a Christian and as Christians we believe (and know) that Jesus Christ never lied. If, however, Adam never existed and it is all a myth as the atheist-evolutionist would want us to believe, then Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ) must have been a liar and a

fraud, because He has personally affirmed ('guaranteed') the existence of Adam, Eve and the historicity of the *Genesis Creation Account.* For instance, on the issue of divorce, He replied as follows:

> *" ... Have you not read that He [GOD] who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female'? ... He said to them, Because of your hard-heartedness Moses allowed you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so."*
> [Matthew19:4b,8KJV].

Many scribes from the Old Testament, including men like Hosea, Job (from the Old Testament), the Apostle Luke, the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Jude, brother of the Apostle James (from the New Testament) also believed that Adam existed:

> *"... then hear in Heaven Your dwelling-place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to all his ways, whose heart You know. For You, You only, know the hearts of all the sons of Adam."*
> [1Kings8:39MKJV].
>
> *"Adam, Seth, Enos."*
> [1Chronicles1:1].
>
> *"But, like Adam, they have broken the covenant. They have acted like traitors against Me there."*
> [Hosea6:7MKJV].
>
> *"If I covered my transgressions like Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom, then let me tremble before a great multitude, and be terrified by the scorn of families; and I will be silent and not go out the door."*
> [Job31:33-34MKJV].
>
> *"... the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God."*
> [Luke3:38MKJV].
>
> "*But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is the type of Him who was to come ...*

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive ...

"And so it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul," the last Adam [JESUS CHRIST] was a life-giving Spirit ...

"For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." [Romans5:14; 1 Corinthians15:22,45; 1 Timothy2:13,14MKJV].

"And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, also prophesied to these, saying, Behold, the Lord came with myriads of His saints ..." [Jude1:14MKJV].

The entire Bible, the Laws of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus Christ hinge on the fact that Adam existed and that the 'first Adam' (Adam from the Garden of Eden) was, in the New Testament, superseded by the 'Last Adam' (Jesus Christ). Take Adam out of the Bible (and out of cultural history the way the atheist-evolutionists purport to do in the name of 'science') and the entire reason for the existence of the Bible and the Gospel evaporates like yesterday's fog.

3. What if #3: "What if Adam was not the first man?"

Now that we have settled the question that Adam indeed existed, what if Adam was not the 'first man' as the Darwinian creationists ('creative evolutionists') would want us to believe and that before Adam there must have existed some *'pre-Adamite race'?*

In that case both the Bible's Old and New Testaments will have to be scrapped as invalid and unreliable, as *both testaments affirm that Adam was the first man:*

3.1 **Old Testament (Hebrew Bible).** The Book of Genesis clearly teaches that before Adam was created, there was 'no man to till the ground':

" ... for Jehovah God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground."

[Genesis2:5MKJV].

3.2 **New Testament.** If any agnostic or skeptic should object that this was only meant to be true and valid for Eden, then the Apostle Paul may be invoked further as one who unmistakably (twice!) declared Adam the first man ever:

"And so it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul,' the last Adam [JESUS] was a life-giving Spirit ... The first man [ADAM] was out of earth, earthy; the second Man [JESUS] was the Lord from Heaven."

[1Corinthians15:45, 47MKJV].

If there really were some pre-Adamite race in existence before the Adam of Genesis, then Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul were shameless liars and the Bible is not true. Besides, how do those who peddle this preposterous theory purport to explain the origins of this mythical 'pre-Adamite race'? Where did it then come from ... through the fairy tale of 'Evolution'?

4. What if #4. "What if Noah, Noah's Ark the Great Flood never existed?"

Then again Jesus Christ must have been a liar and a fraud because He, during the days of His ministry, personally has taken great care to affirm ('guarantee'!) the existence of *Noah, Noah's Ark and the Great Flood* and thus the historicity of the *Genesis Creation Account.* He said it and that settles it! In His comment on the great day of His Second Coming, He has said:

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it also shall be in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they

were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and the flood came and destroyed them all."
[Luke17:26-27MKJV].

Life is about choices, and the earnest and sincere Christian must on the one hand today choose between the malicious rumours about God and the Bible as spread by the 'Darwinian creationists' ('Creative evolutionists') and their partners in delusion, the 'Christian atheists' (postmodernists, e.g., 'Jesus Seminar' & 'Nuwe Hervormers') and, on the other hand, what the Bible really teaches.

Chapter 31

WHAT JESUS CHRIST PROMISED THE OVERCOMER

1. **Introduction.** Jesus Christ has left believers *seven gilt-edged, gold-standard* PROMISES for those who would, in time to come, OVERCOME.

2. **Promises of Jesus Christ.**

2.1 **The Tree of Life.**

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
[Revelation 2:7MKJV].

2.2 **The Crown of Life.**

"Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death."
[Revelation 2:10b,11MKJV].

2.3 **The Hidden Manna, the White Stone and a New Name.**

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give to him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows except he who receives it."
[Revelation 2:17MKJV].

2.4 Power over the Nations & the Morning Star.

"But that which you have, hold fast until I come. And he who overcomes and keeps My works to the end, to him I will give power over the nations. And he will rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter they will be broken to pieces, even as I received from My Father. And I will give him the Morning Star."

[Revelation 2:25-28MKJV].

2.5 White Clothing and the Book of Life.

"The one who overcomes, this one will be clothed in white clothing. And I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

[Revelation 3:5MKJV].

2.6 A Pillar in the Temple of God; God's Name and the New Names of the New Jerusalem and Jesus Christ.

"Behold, I come quickly. Hold fast to that which you have, so that no one may take your crown. Him who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will go out no more. And I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from My God, and My new name."

[Revelation 3:11-12MKJV].

2.7 Dining with Christ and sitting with Christ in His Throne.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and have sat down with My Father in His throne."

[Revelation 3:20-21MKJV].

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Chapter 32

WHEN HATRED TURNS TOXIC

1. **Breaking news.** It was recently announced:

> *"Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called for unification by the Muslim world to annihilate Israel. In a televised address marking annual observance of 'Jerusalem Day' (known in Arabic as 'al-Quds', meaning 'The Holy One'), the leader of the Islamic Republic referred to the Jewish State as 'The Zionist regime' he called 'a deadly, cancerous growth and a detriment to this region' that 'will undoubtedly be uprooted and destroyed."*
> [TV7 ISRAEL NEWS, 25 May 2020].

2. **But will it work?** I don't think any reasonable person will deny the Palestinians' their right to call for geopolitical emancipation and the self-actualisation of their national aspirations.

Bear in mind that God loves all of His Creation, including (for instance, all the tribes, nations and tongues of the earth) and not just Jews and Christians. All of mankind is created in the image of God and should be saved. Although Judaism belongs, cultural-historically, to the Jews and nation of Israel, Christianity is an open religion not meant for Christians only ... get over it!

One just wonders, however, if Iran's call to 'annihilate' Israel will ever work. For instance, take the matter of Haman who wanted to destroy the Jews:

> 2.1 **Enters Haman.** According to the Bible, it so happened that a man called Haman, the highest-ranking official in the kingdom of King Ahasuerus in Shushan where the king's palace was situated, was conspiring to have all the Jews in the

country murdered. The story ends where the Jewish girl, Esther (Hadassah) upon the advice of her uncle, the Jew Mordecai, was instrumental in saving her nation from certain death.

The conspirators, i.e., Haman and all his sons, were eventually hanged from the very gallows the conspirators had meant for the Jew Mordecai. Interestingly, Haman was warned by some wise friends and the wife of his friend Zeresh not to go ahead with his diabolical plans to 'annihilate' the Jews, but he didn't want to listen, later, ironically, to be repeated when Pontius Pilate's wife also had warned Pilate against getting involved with the charges against the innocent Carpenter called 'Jesus of Nazareth'. Pilate also did not listen.

2.2 **The better part of Valour?** Christians observe with incredulity the challenges facing that little country (Israel) of only 20770 km^2 (about the size of the Kruger National Park, South Africa) and 6.4 million citizens surrounded by the Islamic world of the Middle East comprising about 77% of the almost 400 million citizens.

When God blessed Abraham, He said:

"And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed."
[Genesis12:3MKJV].

3. **Where Iran's success will come from.** Abraham is revered mutually by both Judaism and Islam, and since the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob never lied, here is His gilt-edged promise that:

- He will bless those who bless Israel (Abraham > Isaac > Jacob > Israel)

- He will curse those who curse Abraham (Israel)

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- In Israel (Abraham) all the nations of the earth will be blessed*!

*Out of Israel (the 'Jews') has come Jesus Christ and the Gospel of Salvation.

No human being of sound mind enjoys the scene of a Palestinian mother holding a dead baby from the rubble of a bombed apartment block; or enjoys the scene of an Israeli soldier stabbed by an Arab terrorist at the Temple Mount; or enjoys the scene of an Arab teenager, instigated by experienced, ruthless warmongers (who dig up water pipes delivering precious lifesaving water to Gaza to build rockets aimed at Israel) shot down at a border fence for naively agitating against Israel.

Maybe the time has arrived for the leaders of Iran (spiritual, political, economic) to make their peace with Israel so that the nation of Iran can begin to be blessed by the God of Abraham, the historical father of both Jews, Arabs and Muslims. Only then will Israel and Iran have real peace and, who knows, perhaps the Palestinians will too once they see the positive changes kicking in for Iran as a nation.

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Chapter 33

WHERE JOY AND PEACE WILL FLOURISH

1. **Heat vs. Cold.** Technically speaking, there is no such thing as 'cold', as 'cold' is just how the *absence of heat* always will manifest. Heat will invariably flow to where it is cold ('nature abhors a vacuum') and not vice versa. In *Thermodynamics:*

> *"When there is a suitable path between two systems with different temperatures, heat transfer occurs necessarily, immediately, and spontaneously from the hotter to the colder system."*
>
> [Wikipedia].

THE UNIVERSAL RULE: Heat will trump Cold.

2. **Light vs. Darkness.** Technically speaking there is no such thing as darkness, as darkness is how the absence of light always will manifest. But light always trumps darkness; bring in a small candle and it will light up the darkness-engulfed room ... ever tried to bring into a lighted room a 'candle of darkness'?

To bring in the darkness, the flame of the light-emitting candle must first be removed. Remove the light, and darkness will be the result by default. Also bear in mind the velocity (speed) of light (approximately 300 000 k.p.s in vacuo) versus the velocity (speed) of darkness (Zero, Zilch, Nada, Nil).

THE UNIVERSAL RULE: Light will trump Darkness.

3. **Good vs. Evil.** God is a *good God* and the Devil a *bad devil.* The Devil has come to steal, kill and destroy, but Jesus Christ has come to give life in abundance.

> *"I am the door. If anyone enters in by Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."*
>
> [John10:9-11MKJV].

Technically speaking, evil will flourish where godliness is absent, and injustice and unrighteousness will flourish where justice and righteousness are absent (i.e., where good people do nothing). Be that as it may, whenever the Devil reminds you of your past, simply remind him of his future.

> *"And the Devil who deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet were. And he will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*
>
> [Revelation20:10MKJV].

THE UNIVERSAL RULE: Goodness, Justice and Righteousness will, in the final analysis, trump Evil, Injustice and Unrighteousness.

4. **Joy vs. Depression.** God is the Author of Joy, the Devil the author of Depression. The Devil is miserable and, as misery loves company, he will not rest until he's got the entire world as equally miserable as he is, whether by hook or by crook. That is why the religious cult of Atheism and Secular Humanist Societies are sometimes referred to by some as *Dead Poets Societies ...* just about the most morbid and depressing of belief-systems (religions) in the Universe.

Technically speaking, *depression* is the default-position only where *joy* is absent. Do the math: Every religious cult, belief-system (i.e. atheism, atheism-evolutionism, agnosticism); system of philosophy *(Communism, Nazism, Fascism, Bolshevism, Satanism, Scientology, Theosophy, Dianetics, Cybernetics, Secular Humanism, Postmodernism etc.)* or *mysticism; criminal system or social evil (e.g. drug-trafficking, drunkenness and chronic alcoholism etc.)* ever 'invented' to implicitly or explicitly thwart, ignore, resist or replace the Bible, the Moral Laws of God and the Gospel and Lordship of Jesus Christ has always only bring confusion and bitter frustration (best case scenario) or misery, pain and/or terrible harm of some kind or another (worst case scenario). Jesus Christ has said:

> *"I am the door. If anyone enters in by Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."*
>
> [John10:9-11MKJV].
>
> *" ... we write these things to you so that your joy may be full."*
>
> [1John1:4MKJV].
>
> *"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."*
>
> [John4:14MKJV].
>
> *"But let all who put their trust in You rejoice; let them always shout for joy, because You defend them. And let those who love Your name be joyful in You ... And He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with gladness ... Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy ... Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, and Your saints shout for joy."*
>
> [Psalm5:11; 105:43; 126:5; 132:9MKJV].
>
> *"For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will feed them and will lead them to the fountains of living waters. And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes ... And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there will be no more death, nor*

mourning, nor crying out, nor will there be any more pain; for the first things passed away."

[Revelation 7:17; 21:4MKJV].

THE UNIVERSAL RULE: Joy will ultimately (even if for many only in Eternity) trump Disappointment, Depression, Frustration and Sadness.

5. **Peace vs. Turmoil, Turbulence, Tumult, Chaos, Confusion, Dissonance, Trauma.** Where God's peace is absent in the life of a person, turmoil, turbulence, tumult, chaos, confusion, dissonance and trauma will always in some form or another will be the emotional-spiritual default-position of a person.

Someone once remarked that, *'Babylon in all its desolation is not even remotely as desolate as a soul in ruins'.* (Author unknown) Observe the drug-addict, chronic alcoholic and derelict drunk ... that is 'hell' personified, not only for them but also their families, children etc. Also, 'hell' on earth is suffering from clinical depression because of debilitating failure and/or some devastating, earth-shattering loss, disappointment, divorce or bereavement.

Bear in mind that God created the Universe with the 'default-position' of the 'Cosmos', not the 'Chaos'. Jesus Christ has promised:

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid ... I have spoken these things to you so that you might have peace in Me. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."

[John14:27; 16:33MKJV].

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea no longer is. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband.

"And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying out, nor will there be any more pain; for the first things passed away.

"And He sitting on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said to me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. And He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who thirsts I will give of the fountain of the Water of Life freely."

[Revelation21:1-6MKJV].

THE UNIVERSAL RULE: God's Peace will ultimately trump all Turmoil, Turbulence, Tumult, Chaos Confusion, Dissonance, Sadness and Trauma; God's 'Cosmos' will trump Satan's 'Chaos'.

6. **Truth vs. the Lie.** Only those who pursue Truth (Jesus Christ) will find true Joy. Those who reject Christ are pursuing the *Lie* and will die in the guilt and misery of their sins.

In the absence or with the rejection of the Bible, the Moral Law of God and Jesus Christ as Saviour a person will always be the prey of some false cult, philosophy, belief-system or movement peddling one lie ('ideological snake oil') or another. Satan (the Devil) is not called the 'father-of-all-lies' for nothing. Jesus Christ has said:

"You [PHARISEES] are of the Devil as father, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not abide in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it."

[John8:44MKJV].

"Jesus said to him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me."

[John14:6MKJV].

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."
[John10:27MKJV].

"Pilate then said to Him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say it that I am a king. To this end I was born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."
[John18:37MKJV].

"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority upon earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralytic, I say to you, Arise, and take up your cot, and go to your house ... Then Jesus said again to them [the Pharisees], I go away, and you shall seek Me and shall die in your sins. Where I go, you cannot come ... Therefore I said to you that you shall die in your sins, for if you do not believe that I AM, you shall die in your sins."
[Mark2:10; John8:21,24MKJV].

The Bible* teaches:

"And this is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us ...

"But the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, selfcontrol; against such things there is no law."
[1John1:5-10; Galatians5:22MKJV].

"Let it not be! But let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, 'That You might be justified in Your sayings, and will overcome when You are judged.'"
[Romans3:4MKJV].

"For they themselves witness what kind of entrance we had to you, even how you turned from idols to God in order to serve the living and true God."

[1Thessalonians1:9MKJV].

"And we know that the Son of God [JESUS CHRIST] has come, and He has given us an understanding so that we may know Him who is true. And we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and the everlasting life."

[1John5:20MKJV].

THE UNIVERSAL RULE: Truth will ultimately trump the Lie; Faith will trump Atheism; Joy will trump Depression.

*Bible: *Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.*

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Chapter 34

WOLF vs. SHEEP

1. **Wolf.** According to Wikipedia, the wolf *(Canis lupus)* is a ferocious canine and carnivore. It hunts in packs and feeds on large wild hooved animals, smaller animals, live-stock, carrion and garbage. Packs are ideally led by an *Alpha* male & female pair.

Because wolves are territorial animals, fights between wolves reportedly are a principal cause of wolf mortality. On average a male wolf may weigh up to 40kg and stand anything between 105-160cm at the shoulder with females at 37 kg and between 80-85cm at the shoulder. Wolves are mainly found in North America and Eurasia.

2. **Sheep.** According to Wikipedia, the sheep *(Ovis aries)* is a quadrupedal ruminant animal kept as livestock by sheep farmers e.g., in Australia, New Zealand, the British Isles, some central South American countries, among others.

Domestic sheep are the most numerous of all sheep. The male ('ram') may weigh anything between 45-160kg and the female ('ewe') between 45-100kg. Sheep may range anything between 90-180cm in length and stand 65-127 cm at the shoulder. Sheep are strongly gregarious flock animals and in Tibet are sometimes used as pack animals. They have peripheral vision with good hearing and smell. They have been domesticated for millenniums for agricultural purposes.

3. **Which species will prevail : Wolf or Sheep?** Sheep apparently number in the one billion worldwide and wolves only 300

000. Since numbers would not really be the determining factor in a hypothetical Narnia-style 'war' between wolves and sheep, wolves (apex predators in the wild) probably would have a nice head start considering their legendary strength, stealth and matching ferocity. For instance, wolves reportedly killed 10 000 sheep in the French Alps in 2016.

4. **The Final Verdict.** The final question of which species finally would prevail over the other in the end is a no-brainer:

In the long run and final analysis the SHEEP would prevail over WOLVES for the simple reason that SHEEP have a SHEPHERD and wolves have none. Jesus says:

"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and I know those that are Mine, and I am known by those who are Mine."

[John10:11,14MKJV].

"And I give to them eternal life, and they shall never ever perish, and not anyone shall pluck them out of My hand. My Father who gave them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

[John10:28-29MKJV].

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Chapter 35

THE AWESOME CALLING OF STEWARDSHIP

1. **A huge Responsibility.** I once heard this anecdote (or 'urban legend') where the farmer has had to attend an important conference pertaining to agricultural matters in a city near him. His brief to his farm foreman, a gnarled and weary old-timer already white on top with the frost of many winters, was to look after the farm for the day that he would be away, milk the cows, plough a plot of land for a new vegetable patch and mow the small stretch of lawn near the house. When he returned late that evening, this was, however, the report he received:

> *The foreman could not milk the cows, as the milking machine wouldn't start and he couldn't sort out the problem; the land was not ploughed because the tractor had stricken a nasty boulder that completely demolished the small plough behind; the lawn was not mowed because the lawnmower's engine had jammed stuck only a few yards into the first lane.*

So, when the farmer asked his foreman how he had managed to ruin so many implements in the span of a single day, the foreman replied:

> *"Sir, I got up very early this morning ... unless one rises early it will never all get done."*

2. **Some Definitions.**

2.1 **Steward:**

'One employed in a large household or estate to manage domestic concerns such as the supervision of servants, collection of rents, and keeping of accounts.'

[Merriam-Webster].

2.2 **Stewardship:**

'The conducting, supervising, or managing of something especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.'

[Merriam-Webster].

3. **Christian stewardship.** Many people will probably be shocked to hear that, in Eternity, Christians are going to work and have responsibilities, so aptly illustrated by Jesus' parable about the 'talents' ('pounds') entrusted by the nobleman to his servants, each commensurate with his abilities.

The one who e.g., produced 10 pounds were given to rule over 10 cities; the one who produced 5 pounds to rule over 5 cities and the one who produced nothing was dismissed in infamy:

"And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

"But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had

gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

"And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

"And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

"(And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

[Luke19:11-27MKJV].

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward."

[1Corinthians3:14KJV].

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Chapter 36

MAN IN THE MIRROR

1. **The Alpha & Omega.** One of the many Names ('Appellations') of God (i.e., the YHWH of Moses & Mt. Sinai) is *'the Alpha & Omega' ('the Beginning & the End'; 'the First & the Last'):*

> *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."*
>
> [Revelation22:13KJV].

Not only is the Creator (from the *Book of Genesis* and the Bible in general) omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, but in Him all possible knowledge, information and wisdom converge into the *Absolute & Infinite Holiness, Wisdom & Truth.*

With the assumed I.Q. (Intelligence Quotient) of *INFINITY to the power of infinity* (INFINITY^{infinity}) God holds the key to and knows and controls everything there is to know and control. God being absolutely and infinitely omniscient, omnipotent & omnipresent, it thus stands to reason that He is also absolutely and infinitely HOLY.

In fact, few (if any) people ever feared God because they consider Him 'evil'; when people fear God (and they should!) it is because He is HOLY.

2. **The Old Testament.** In the *Hebrew Bible ('Old Testament')* we find not only the (i) *Genesis Creation Account,* the (ii) Torah ('Pentateuch'), the (iii) *history of the Jewish nation* (nation of Israel) and (iv) *prophecies from major*

& minor prophets, but also (v) the *books of wisdom (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon).*

For evangelical Christians the *Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)* with its many *Messianic Prophecies represents 'Jesus Christ concealed'* whereas the *New Testament represents 'Jesus Christ revealed'.*

Furthermore, does the *Old Testament* serve as a 'tutor' for modern man irrespective of current creed or religious persuasion. So perfectly does the *New Testament* narrative and Gospel fit into the prophecies of the *Old Testament* surrounding the 'coming Messiah' that one man has likened the *Old Testament* to a mould ... the 'mould' that had forged and had given us the 'medallion' of the New Testament. The Bible says:

> *"Wherefore the law [LAW OF MOSES] was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."*
>
> [Galatians3:24-25KJV].

3. **The Perfect Mirror.** The *Hebrew Bible ('Old Testament')* and the *Law of Moses* today serve as a magnificent divine mirror for us to look into to get a clear picture of what we all morally look like, but, just as a mirror only serves to show up that our face is dirty but not to solve the problem of the dirt, so the Blood (Sacrifice) of Christ has come to cleanse us from the moral guilt lit up and exposed by the Law of Moses in the mirror of the Hebrew Bible:

> *"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation ... For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."*
>
> [Hebrews9:28; 1Corinthians15:22KJV].

4. **Christians should stay humble.** The Bible warns Christians, especially those still espousing so-called 'Replacement Theory', not to get puffed up and proud about Salvation in Christ as if they had 'earned' or engineered it by being 'good', but admonishes us to humbly contemplate and remember our roots by the Grace and Providence of God (capitals inserted for more clarity):

> *"And if some of the branches [JEWS] were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree [CHRISTIANS], were grafted in among them, and became a sharer of the root and the fatness of the olive tree [ISRAEL] with them, do not boast against the branches [JEWS]. But if you boast, it is not you [CHRISTIAN] that bears the root, but the root [ISRAEL] bears you. You will say then, The branches [JEWS] were broken off so that I [CHRISTIAN] might be grafted in.*
>
> *"Well, because of unbelief they [ISRAEL] were broken off, and you [CHRISTIAN] stand by faith. Do not be high-minded, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches [JEWS], fear lest He also may not spare you [CHRISTIAN] either!*
>
> *"Behold then the kindness, and the severity of God; on those having fallen [JEWS], severity; but on you [CHRISTIAN], kindness, if you continue in the kindness. Otherwise you [CHRISTIAN] also will be cut off. And those also, if they [JEWS] do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in. For God is able to graft them [JEWS] in again."*
>
> [Romans11:17-23MKJV].

P.S.
1. ISRAEL = The 'Olive Tree', 'Root' & 'Natural Branches'.
2. The CHURCH = The 'Wild Olive Tree' & 'Grafted in Branches'.

With this I hope the whole erroneous idea of 'Replacement Theology', i.e., that the Church has superseded Judaism or has

replaced Israel as the true (spiritual) Israel, has finally been laid to rest.

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Chapter 37

MAN'S SEARCH FOR THE TRUE ELIXIR OF LIFE

1. **The Big Freeze 'Cryonics' won't work.** Zack Guzman writes:

> *"In the desert climate of Scottsdale, Arizona, rest 147 brains and bodies, all frozen in liquid nitrogen with the goal of being revived one day ... It's not science fiction — to some it might not even be science — yet thousands of people around the world have put their trust, lives and fortunes into the promise of cryonics, the practice of preserving a body with antifreeze shortly after death in hopes future medicine might be able to bring the deceased back."*
>
> [Guzman, Zack (2016*) Meet the Company Offering a Chance at Immortality for $200 000.* CNBC, Online 2021].

These high-tech snake-oil salesmen of 'science' will yet learn that life is more than a collection of atoms, molecules, brains, hair, skin, nails and dandruff; how those gullible human 'lab-rats' are ever going to get their $200 000 plus interest and non-performance penalties back from these quacks I don't know. Only a fool would put his trust in 'Cryonics'. The Bible says:

> *"And as it is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment ..."*
>
> [Hebrews9:27MKJV].

2. **Evolution won't work.** If the evolutionists were to be believed, 'Evolution' ('Cosmology', 'Stellar Evolution' etc.) has been

practicing its 'craft' now for 'billions of years' and ('Palaeontology') for 'millions of years', yet the human race's mortality rate still doggedly persists at a lethal 100% for every generation and every nation ... why can't 'Evolution' get it right? Even the chimpanzee cracking the nut with a rock ('tool') has, for the past thousands of years (if you are a Christian) or for the past 'millions of years' (if you are an evolutionist) never changed or improved his technology. He has, in other words, never 'evolved' and probably will still be cracking his nut with a rock millions of years from today. It thus stands to reason that only a fool would put his trust in 'Evolution'. Here is the best they can promise us:

- a membership card from your nearest 'Secular Humanist Society'.
- a 100% mortality rate for every nation and every generation.
- death-after-death (no Hereafter).

3. **Scientology won't work.** This religious cult posing as a 'church' won't work either ... sorry to have to disappoint you but all scientologists are, just L. Ron Hubbard and the rest of humanity, going to die and after that ... the *Great White Throne Judgment.* Only a fool would put his trust in 'Scientology'.

> *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."*
>
> [Hebrews9:27-28KJV].

4. **Space Travel won't work.** As much as we are intrigued by 'Science' and scientists, the quest to conquer space won't work ... get over it. The Cosmos is simply too vast and way beyond the reach of mankind.

Only a fool would put his trust in 'space exploration' (i.e., except for what may be useful for satellite technology, sky-wars between planetary belligerents or for space tourism inside the cramped little backyard of our teeny weeny little solar system).

5. **Humanism, Transhumanism and Posthumanism won't work.** This won't work either because proponents of these ideals also believe, by their own admission, in *death-after-death.* Just like the evolutionists they also have given up all hope to ever advance beyond a 100% mortality rate for every generation of mankind. Only a fool would thus put his trust in any kind of atheist-driven 'Humanism'.

6. **The True Elixir of Life.** Jesus Christ has promised:

> *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life ... Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My Word and believes on Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life ... Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.'*
>
> [John3:16; 5:24; 14:1-3MKJV].

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Chapter 38

DROP THE 'DEPRESSO' (BEER)

1. **National Lockdown Challenge.** During national lockdown and with the ban on the sale of alcohol countrywide it may be a good idea to drop the 'DEPRESSO' (beer) once and for all.

Over and above the many physiological effects and medical warnings on the side-effects of chronic alcohol-abuse and alcoholism (e.g., the destruction of the liver etc.) habitual beer-drinking also may cause the dehydration of the body and the depletion of precious anti-depression vitamins and minerals which (in turn) may cause a vicious cycle of:

Drinking > Depression > Drinking > Depression > Drinking > REHAB > HOME > REHAB > HOME >REHAB!

I have, where I used to work at the large Iron & Steel Manufacturing Co. (during the 1980s), seen three colleagues die from liver cancer and it was not a pretty sight. Admittedly, their cancer probably was caused by a compound set of factors (such as air pollution etc.) but probably lethally aggravated by the beer-drinking habit so ingrained in the culture of South African males (and these days, many females too).

Furthermore, those who say there is no such a thing as 'hell' have no idea of the hell that chronic alcoholism and chronic, debilitating drunkenness can do to themselves and their families. I know some men think it 'macho' to 'down' a beer or six at the drop of a hat but as far as I am concerned 'real men' do not do that to their families.

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Years ago, after having had much trouble with drunk students kicking down doors and causing drunken-driven collateral damage to our dorms in the company-hostel of my firm, a smart (sober) varsity student once asked me jokingly, "*What's the difference between a pig and a drunk student?"* I just stared at him, stupefied and shaking my head. His answer: *"A pig does not change into a student after six beers!"* So true.

During the 1960s a young girl in her early teens, a friend of our family and at the time residing with her parents in Cottesloe in Johannesburg, came home from school one day only to find her father slouched forward at the kitchen table with a small axe embedded in his skull; the couple (both career-alcoholics) were heavily inebriated and have had an argument. The teenager then had to phone an ambulance as her mother was too 'stoned' to do it herself.

In Brixton, Johannesburg another harrowing story of a couple also reportedly arguing; in this case the wife had also grabbed an axe (probably sober and out of self-defence) and according to our eyewitness the unruly, inebriated husband had eventually to be helped into the ambulance while desperately clutching his one hand, almost severed at the wrist, with the other hand still intact.

It is no wonder that, in South Africa, citizens call 'beer' (and other hard liquor) 'Lawaaiwater' ('Noisewater').

2. **Alcohol the stain-remover.** They say alcohol removes stains. It may also remove:

- Dad into 'rehab'
- Mom back to mother.
- Children into foster care; and
- Furniture into pawn (or back to the dealer).

Some alarming statistics (South Africa):

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- *"Almost 6 out of 10 adolescent and adult drinkers engage in heavy binge drinking: 70.8% of male and 33,7% of female drinkers, higher than both the regional and global averages."*

[SAMRC].

- *"The road traffic fatality rate is more than 33 per 100,000 population – nearly double the global average – and mortuary surveillance data indicate that approximately half are alcohol-related. New research shows that drunk driving accounted for 27.1% of fatal crashes in South Africa. 'These deaths are most common at night-time, particularly on weekends and, as most of the deaths are adults, this translates into a considerable loss of livelihood for affected households ...' "*

[SAMRC].

- According to Forbes, South Africa in 2017 was (and probably still is) the world champion in drunken driving.

3. **Recommendations for Governmental Authorities by the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC).** The SAMRC recommends as follows:

"The SAMRC says the SAFER strategy currently being promoted by WHO should also be aggressively promoted

S: Strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability.
A: Advance and enforce drink-driving counter measures.
F: Facilitate access to screening, brief interventions and treatment.
E: Enforce bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship and promotion."

4. **Conclusion.** Accept all the medical, paramedical and counselling support you can afford to get, and remember that Jesus Christ still saves from the 'guttermost' to the uttermost.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

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[Philippians4:13].

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Chapter 39

EVERYBODY NEEDS SOMEBODY SOMETIME

1. **The roses were white.** Once, when I still used to be active in corporate training during the period 2007-2012, I was in Durban (South Africa) to present a workshop (on *Occupational Health & Safety)* to several employees from a well-known company engaged in the countrywide production of dairy milk and cheese.

My firm had arranged for me to be billeted in a guesthouse in *Cowies Hill,* a posh suburb strategically located along the famous *Comrades Marathon* route, the world's largest and oldest ultra-marathon race between *Durban* (affectionately known as 'Durbs' because of its erosive effect on cars at the coast) *and Pietermaritzburg* (affectionately known as 'Maritzburg') in the Kwazulu-Natal province, with a gruelling distance of approximately 87km (the 'up race') or 90km (the 'down race'). To give an idea of the size of the event:

> *"The 2019 race was capped at 25 000 runners."*
>
> [Wikipedia].

Vic Clapham was the founder of the marathon (1921), and it was won by Wally Hayward five times and by Bruce Fordyce a record nine times.

Be that as it may, *Cowies Hill* is, like the many other suburbs in the area, located in a picturesque subtropical paradise overgrown with indigenous trees, plants, all kinds of palms, botanical subtropical wonders, some of the loveliest residential gardens in Durban ... and some of the world's most venomous

snakes (eclipsed perhaps only by the upmarket suburb of the neighbouring *Kloof,* to rhyme with 'roof').

2. **The reality of human frailty aptly demonstrated.** At the guesthouse, breakfast was served at 7am on a patio fringed by a charming row of *Avon* ('Groundcover' and shrubby) white roses in full bloom, and, having arrived somewhat early, the patrons were standing around on this patio sipping orange juice, getting acquainted and chatting away about the events of the day while waiting for the tables to be laid.

Now, I must have wandered too close to the edge of the patio, about one metre high and not barricaded by a handrail of any sort, of course a serious oversight by the owner of the facility. At some point I inadvertently proceeded to miss my step and to find myself catapulted head over heels onto the row of rose-bushes fringing the patio.

So, there I lay, spread out on my back like a beached whale on the row of rose-bushes with thorns from all sides harassing me with every subtle movement I endeavoured to make to save myself or 'alleviate my plight'.

It was, however, a hopeless case, and within seconds the rest of the shocked patrons, momentarily paralyzed, were upon me to extricate me from where I appeared to lay prostrate like an Indian mystic of a Yogi engaged in some popcorn version of transcendental meditation.

In all my adult life I had never been that helpless (physically) in public before and it has left me quite shaken, humiliated and silently outraged by the guesthouse's lack of foresight in this regard as well as by my own lack of professional vigilance as a corporate trainer in, of all things, health & safety.

3. **The object lesson learned.** No man is an island, and no matter how gifted, talented, qualified or self-sufficient, everybody will

need somebody sometime. Eve was created for Adam as a 'help' and a 'mate'; the Bible clearly teaches:

> *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."*
>
> [Ecclesiastes4:9-12KJV].

4. **The Great White Throne Judgment.** At the end of the age there will come a moment when, as the Bible says:

> *"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."*
>
> [Revelation20:11-12KJV].

On that day no one will be spared by his fame, political connections, talents, gifts, eloquence, intellect or great learning ... those who stand there will be standing there as naked and helpless as the day they were born. The priceless invitation to divine help from God, however, still stands:

> *"I [JESUS] counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."*
>
> [Revelation3:18KJV].

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Chapter 40

THE FURNACE, THE FORGE AND THE HAMMER

1. **Be of Good Cheer.** In his book, *'Faith's Cheque-Book on the Bank of Faith',* Charles Spurgeon writes:

> *"My Lord's words are true; I have my share of tribulation beyond all doubt. How can I look to be at home in the enemy's country, joyful while in exile, or comfortable in a wilderness? This is not my rest. This the place of the furnace, the forge and the hammer."*

Most of us would probably, I think, wholeheartedly agree.

2. **Solomon builds his Temple.** I am reminded of a time when Solomon was engaged in the building of the temple. The Bible says:

> *"And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building."*
>
> [1Kings6:7KJV].

From this passage it is clear that *(i) the stones were hewn in a quarry away from the new temple precinct* to *(ii) limit the clatter and jangle of the builders to the quarry.* The noise of the builders from the cutting and chiselling of the stones were not allowed to sully the sacred skies of the dedicated temple precinct.

3. **This World is God's 'Quarry'.** The Lord's' people are like stones being hewn at a quarry, with this world as the quarry; let the uncouth noise of the builders' chiselling away at the rough and hard stone of ignorance, disobedience, superficial spirituality and callous indifference to the pain of others be heard here in this quarry and in this quarry only, never to echo again in the pristine purity and Shekinah glory of the Father's 'House of Many Mansions' (John14:2-3) where the clatter and jangle of this life's pain, sorrow, suffering and struggling will have been left behind forever and even the strident sound of crying and taste of bitter tears will have been dried from the faces of God's children by God Himself.

> *"For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will feed them and will lead them to the fountains of living waters. And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes ... And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying out, nor will there be any more pain; for the first things passed away."*
>
> [Revelation7:17; 21:4MKJV].

4. **Jesus Christ was also in this furnace.** Jesus Christ has had to suffer the discomfort, pain and humiliation of the furnace in the quarry of life in Jerusalem Himself too. The Bible says:

> *"Though he [JESUS CHRIST] were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."*
>
> [Hebrews5:8KJV].

How would we ever have been able (in all Eternity) to appreciate the pain and excruciating torture of the Roman cross Jesus Christ has had to suffer, or fellowship with His suffering if we had never suffered and felt pain ourselves? How would we ever have been able to appreciate His sacrifice of giving His life

for His friends unless we, in the grand scheme of things, were destined to taste death ourselves? Jesus has promised:

> *"Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that where I am, you may be also ... I have spoken these things to you so that you might have peace in Me. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."*
>
> [John14:1-3; 16:33MKJV].

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Chapter 41

THE MIRACLE OF SPIRITUAL REGENERATION

1. **All people must be saved.** God wants *everyone* on earth to be saved irrespective of race, colour, culture, age, gender, socio-economic status, political affiliation or current religious persuasion.

> *"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen."*
>
> [Matthew28:18-20MKJV].
>
> *"First of all, then, I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*
>
> [1Timothy2:1-4MKJV].
>
> *"For there is no difference both of Jew and of Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call on Him. For everyone, "whoever shall call on the name of the Lord will be saved."*
>
> [Romans10:12-13MKJV].

2. **Being 'saved' not the same as 'conversion to a religion'.** Being 'saved' is not the same as 'converting to some religion'. Converting to a religion (any religion) is a cultural act that may bring certain cultural benefits (or not). Being 'saved', however,

means experiencing *'spiritual regeneration'* by the Grace of God as a Christian and follower of Jesus Christ. It is also referred to as the *'born-again'* experience, and experience that cannot be ordered at will. Nobody can come to Jesus Christ unless God the Father draws him to do so.

> *"Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ... No one can come to Me unless the Father who has sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day."*
>
> [John3:3; 6:44MKJV].

4. **God is not unreasonable.** God is not unreasonable and will probably, in terms of the promise and guarantee in 1Timothy2:1-4, draw (call) every human being to Him at one time or another.

To then go and read a mechanical 'election' or 'predestination' into the Scripture that teaches that no one can come to God unless God draws him or her is plain malicious. The saving Grace of God has probably (prophetically-historically) appeared to all people in the history of the world and will continue to do so until the end comes.

The option to respond to the draw (call) of God is not mandatory (compulsory) but voluntary (optional), as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is offered to all but forced on none.

> *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live discreetly, righteously and godly, in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to Himself a special people, zealous of good works ...*
>
> *"or God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting*

life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him ...

"Come to Me [JESUS] all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke on you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

[Titus2:11-14; John3:16-17; Matthew11:28MKJV].

6. **Justification & Remission of sins.** Those who respond to the draw (call) of God will receive forgiveness and the remission of sins. They will be 'born-again' by putting their faith in Jesus Christ, God's flawless paschal lamb who died for the sins of the world which will have nothing at all to do with 'converting' to some 'religion'.

The Bible teaches that God will honour those who accept and honour His Son, Jesus Christ, as there is no other name by which anyone can be saved. The 'born-again' experience ('spiritual regeneration') means that the one that responds to the call (draw) of God and who honours His Son (Jesus Christ) has become a member of a 'new species of man' (or woman).

"But as many as received Him, He gave to them authority to become the children of God, to those who believe on His name, who were born, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but were born of God ...

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord ...

"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us ...

"And there is salvation in no other One; for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved ...

"For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, so that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My Word and believes on Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life."

[John1:12-13; Romans6:23; 1John1:7-10; Acts4:12; John5:22-24MKJV].

9. **Born twice.** Man is born *first* when he is born as a member of a species related to the *'first' man, Adam.* Man is born the *second time ('born again')* when he, by believing the Gospel, by faith becomes *a member of the new species of man related to the 'last Adam', Jesus Christ* (a life-giving Spirit).

Furthermore, the person responding to God's draw (call) by accepting and coming to Christ for Salvation may confess His sins directly to God; no 'priest' will be required to mediate between the respondent and God, as there is *only one true Mediator ('High Priest')* between God and man ...the man Christ Jesus.

"And so it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul" the last Adam [JESUS CHRIST] was a life-giving Spirit ...

"For God is one, and there is one Mediator of God and of men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

[1Corinthians15:45; 1Timothy2:5MKJV].

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Chapter 42

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

1. **'The Picture of Dorian Gray' (Novel).** The *Picture of Dorian Gray* (by Oscar Wilde) is, in short, the story of a man whose wish, i.e., *to sell his soul for his portrait instead of his body to age,* eventually came true thanks to the occult influences of a magical (probably satanic) pact with an Egyptian cat:

> *"Newly understanding that his beauty will fade, Dorian expresses the desire to sell his soul, to ensure that the picture, rather than he, will age and fade. The wish is granted, and Dorian pursues a libertine life of varied amoral experiences while staying young and beautiful; all the while, his portrait ages and records every sin."*
> [Wikipedia].

2. **The Moral Lesson.** My submission (but only as a hunch, not as formal doctrine) is that the opposite might be true i.e., *that our body is the splitting image of our spirit,* just the other way around as the case was with Dorian Gray, whose end was quite tragic.

In the final analysis, and, thanks to the redeeming work of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary (Golgotha), it will be our immortal spirit (the real, authentic person) that will stay forever flawlessly youthful and pristine and the physical body (the 'portrait') that will grow old and decrepit with age, just like in the story of Dorian Gray.

To reverse the analogy, our spirit ('spirit man') and not our 'physical man' constitutes the 'real person', while the physical person is no more than a portrait or likeness of the real person

(the spirit); and, thankfully, it is the 'portrait' (body) that will grow old and die, but not the 'real person' (spirit).

3. **This 'hunch' supported by Scripture.** Although I have introduced this idea only as a hunch as I am always wary of heresy in doctrine, the idea is supported by Scripture, i.e., due to the forces of 'spiritual regeneration' (i.e., the 'new birth' or 'born-again' experience) our spirit (the real person) remains youthful and intact while the body (the 'portrait') ages with time. The Bible teaches:

> *"Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
>
> [John3:3MKJV].
>
> "*For you ought to put off the old man (according to your way of living before) who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And you should put on the new man, who according to God was created in righteousness and true holiness."*
>
> [Ephesians 4:22-24MKJV].
>
> *"For this cause we do not faint; but though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For the lightness of our present affliction works out for us a far more excellent eternal weight of glory, we not considering the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are not lasting, but the things which are not seen are everlasting."*
>
> [2Corinthians4:16-18MKJV].

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Chapter 43

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD?

1. **The Fallacy of Religious Syncretism.** The problem Evangelicals have with *religious syncretism ('Interfaithism')* is the myth that some religious leaders are spreading to the effect that all religions lead to the same *'Heaven', 'Paradise', 'Nirvana' or 'Utopia'* and the *'Land of Beulah'* etc.

Having said that, bear in mind that the subject under discussion has nothing to do with malicious exclusivism or snobbery, only with the hard facts of Scripture (and with Scripture is meant the Holy Bible comprising the *Hebrew Bible* or *Old Testament,* and the *New Testament.*

1.1 **There is no such a thing as a 'Supreme Race' or 'Racial Supremacy'.** All races have been created equal; the Nazi dream of a 'supreme Aryan race' was a figment of their sick, diabolical imagination. Some may be culturally and/or technologically more advanced than others, but outside of that all people are created in the image of God, irrespective of race, skin tone or colour, gender, socio-economic status, political affiliation and current religious persuasion. All lives really matter to God ... period.

The Bible (Christianity) does not make provision for racial snobbery of any kind or class distinction and/or caste stratification in society when it comes to the moral laws and Sinai (stone) commandments from the days of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus Christ; all people (from North to South and East to West) are creatures of God created in the image of God.

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In Christianity there is neither *racism* nor *sexism* (for instance, women are not considered inferior to men or vice versa). Furthermore, God wants everyone to be saved and none to perish. The Bible clearly teaches:

"And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female."

[Genesis1:27MKJV].

"For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them strays, does he not leave the ninety and nine and go into the mountains and seek the straying one? And if it happens that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety and nine which did not stray. Even so it is not the will of your Father in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

[Matthew18:11-14MKJV].

"And some were present at the same time reporting to Him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And answering, Jesus said to them, Do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, No. But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were sinners above all men who lived in Jerusalem? I tell you, No. But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

[Luke13:1-5MKJV].

"But even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him ...

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give to them eternal life, and they shall never ever perish, and not anyone shall pluck them out of My hand. My Father who gave

them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one!"

[John3:14-17; 10:27-30MKJV].

"*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

[Romans6:23MKJV].

"The Lord is not slow concerning His promise, as some count slowness, but is long-suffering toward us, not purposing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

[2Peter3:9MKJV].

1.2 **The Gospel of Jesus Christ was not meant for Christians only.** Of particular importance is the promise that *the Gospel is offered to all (but forced on none)* irrespective of nation, race, colour or current religious persuasion. The *Kingdom of God* is not an exclusive, closed *'for Christians only'* kingdom. Christianity is, in fact, the most inclusive of all faiths in the world. As alluded to before, the Bible says:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that <u>ANY</u> should perish, but that <u>ALL</u> should come to <u>REPENTANCE</u>."

[2Peter3:9MKJV].

All people are valuable to God and loved with the same love that the Christian is loved with. After all, Jesus Christ has died for the sins of the entire world.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ..."

[1Timothy1:15MKJV].

1.3 **The difference between 'creatures' and 'sons' ('children') of God.** Jesus Christ, the Creator and Master of the Universe has made it abundantly clear that God wishes ALL to come

to *repentance* and *believe the Gospel* without which one cannot be saved or become a 'son' (child) of God.

Because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is offered to all and forced on none, there is no rule, law or commandment in the Bible (from Genesis to Revelation) that prohibits or precludes any member of any religion on earth, including the atheist, humanist and agnostic or any person whosoever for that matter from coming to Jesus Christ and accepting and confessing Him as LORD and Saviour ... *Christianity was not invented for Christians only.*

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen."

[Matthew28:18-20MKJV].

"God, who at many times and in many ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, who being the shining splendor of His glory, and the express image of His essence, and upholding all things by the word of His power, through Himself cleansing of our sins, He sat down on the right of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

[Hebrew1:1-4MKJV].

"*But as many as received Him, He gave to them authority to become the children of God, to those who believe on His name, who were born, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but were born of God."*

[John1:12-13MKJV].

"And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God draws near. Repent, and believe the gospel."

[Mark1:14-15MKJV].

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

[Romans6:23MKJV].

2. **The defining Spiritual Law.** The Bible teaches:

"But as many as received him [JESUS CHRIST], to them gave he [JESUS CHRIST] power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his [JESUS CHRIST'S] name."*

[John1:12MKJV].

'Sons': children of God, male or female.

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Chapter 44

WHY I WILL NEVER CONSULT A FORTUNE-TELLER

1. **Introduction.** I will never consult a fortune-teller because:

1.1 **God does not approve of psychics, mediums & fortune-tellers.**

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Again you shall say to the sons of Israel, Any man of the sons of Israel or of the strangers who live in Israel, that gives any of his seed to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones.

"And I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given of his seed to Molech, to defile My sanctuary, and to profane My holy name. And if the people of the land in any way hide their eyes from the man when he gives of his seed to Molech, and do not kill him, then I will set My face against that man and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go lusting after him to commit adultery with Molech, from among their people.

"And the soul that turns to mediums, and to spirit-knowers, to go lusting after them, I will even set My face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. And you shall sanctify yourselves, and be holy. For I am Jehovah your God."

[Leviticus20:1-7MKJV].

"There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, an observer of clouds, or a fortune-teller, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or one who calls to the dead.

"For all that do these things are an abomination to Jehovah. And because of these abominations Jehovah your God drives them out from before you. You shall be perfect with Jehovah your God.

"For these nations whom you shall possess listened to observers of clouds and to diviners. But as for you, Jehovah your God has not allowed you to do so."

[Deuteronomy18:11-14MKJV].

"And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times and used fortune-tellers. And he dealt with familiar spirits and wizards. He worked much wickedness in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke Him to anger."

"*And also Josiah put away the mediums, and the soothsayers, and the family gods, and the idols, and all the abominations which were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, so that he might perform the Words of the Law which were written in the Book which Hilkiah the priest found in the house of Jehovah. And there was no king like him before him, who turned to Jehovah with all his heart and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses. And after him none rose up like him."*

[2Kings21:6; 23:24-25MKJV].

"For so says Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your fortune-tellers in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you dream. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says Jehovah."

[Jeremiah29:8-9MKJV].

'For the family idols speak iniquity, and the diviners have seen a lie and have told false dreams. They comfort in vain; therefore they wandered like a flock; they were troubled because there was no shepherd."

[Zechariah10:2MKJV].

1.2 **Fortune-tellers cannot even foresee their own impending catastrophes, never mind those of others.** Fortune tellers have no idea what lies ahead for themselves, let alone for others. Where were they when the Rwanda genocide happened, or all the earthquakes suffered in e.g., Turkey, Asia, Haiti etc? Why didn't they foresee and help prevent the

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assassinations of e.g., Abraham Lincoln (1865), John F. Kennedy (1963) and Bobby Kennedy (1968)?

None of the 'holy men', 'godmen', fakirs, gurus, swamis and fortune-tellers of India, a country rich in the traditions of Indian mystics and the paranormal, could foresee and prevent the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi (1948); same with Benazir Bhutto who was assassinated in 2007 in Pakistan.

Travel to Nazi Germany where the 'Aryan race' of befuddled Nazis tried to act out there 'super-race fantasies' from 1933 to 1945 on the instigation of the head-clown in charge, Adolf Hitler. None of the fortune-tellers in service to the horoscope-pursuing gallery of Nazi kingpins did 'foresee' (i) the more than 40 attempts on Hitler's life, or (ii) the failed Von Stauffenberg bombing at the Hitler HQ-conference nor (iii) the assassination of Richard Heydrich, the notorious Gestapo kingpin.

No Nazi prophet ever made provision for (iv) the failure of the Battle of Britain; (v) the spectacular failures of the *Barbarossa* campaign (Russia); (vi) the fall of Mussolini, Hitler's partner in crime or the D-Day invasion of Normandy on 6 June 1944. So 'good' were Nazi 'seers' that on that historic day, (vii) the German *Wehrmacht* was 200 miles away from the beaches of Normandy engaged in war games in order to prepare for a possible Allied invasion at Pas de Calais (!); (viii) Gen. Erwin Rommel, commander in charge of the defences of the Atlantic Wall, was miles away celebrating his wife's birthday. So much for the Nazi's 'Aryan' superiority.

Why didn't any psychic prevent the Twin Towers (9/11) tragedy? The Bible says:

"Bring near your cause, says Jehovah; bring out your strong reasons, says the King of Jacob. Let them bring them out, and tell us what shall happen; let them reveal the former things,

what they are, that we may look on them and know the final end of them; or declare to us things to come. Reveal the near things after this, so that we may know that you are gods. Yes, do good, or do evil, so that we may be amazed and see together."

[Isaiah41:21-23MKV].

1.3 **Fortune-tellers cast their clients' futures in non-negotiable concrete, while God has left the future open and negotiable thanks to the gift and privilege of free will and free moral agency.** God has not left the future 'open' (unknown) for nothing; it was designed to accommodate man as a 'free moral agent' to exercise 'free will' driven moral decisions, otherwise Creation would have been an anthropological farce.

The future remains continually 'negotiable', hence the right for man to either choose a life of racketeering and crime or choose to repent and live a life worthy of the Gospel. The fact that God is sovereign and knows the future beforehand does not compromise the fact of man's free will and neither does it mean that God manipulates men's fate as if they were tin-soldier automatons.

Do the math: God has free will and being created in His image man obviously has free will too. The difference is that whereas God's free will is absolute and infinite, man's free will is borrowed and limited ... God is omnipotent, but man is not omnipotent. What the fortune-teller purports to be able to do is to neutralise God's authority and disable and override His power over mankind to remove the 'negotiability' of the future and bend it to his or her forecasts and psychic machinations (and that from the comfort a dilapidated caravan or from his backstreet, basement cubicle in the sleaziest part of the city.

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This is heresy of the worst kind, for the fortune-teller purports to know better and exercise more power over life and limb than the Creator Himself.

1.4 **'Foretold fortunes' relentlessly pursued (devoid of common sense) may become dysfunctional self-fulfilling prophecies leading up to misfortune and heartache.** Gullible people who believe what these charlatans 'foretell' (either by tea-leaves, the stars through horoscopes*, or by the palm of the hand) will eventually become so engrossed in that lifestyle and swayed by their psychic's power that may leave them helpless, hopeless neurotics.

Foretelling peoples' fortunes may make such people paranoid and pathologically dependent on 'psychics'.

*Horrorscopes?

1.5 **All 'psychics' ought to have been fabulously wealthy by now; why aren't they?** Not one single of them know next week's lottery or horse-racing winning number. Some are so pathetic and dishonest that they actually try to sell 'winning numbers' (of lotteries) to idiots (and obviously succeed).

1.6 **In the Bible the apostles rebuked the fortune-teller.** On the one occasion that the apostles were confronted by a 'psychic', they rebuked her 'spirit of divination' and sent her away.

"And as we went to prayer, it happened that a certain girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by divining. The same followed Paul and us and cried, saying, 'These men are the servants of the Most High God, who are announcing to us the way of salvation.' And she did this many days. But being distressed, and turning to the demonic spirit, Paul said, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her! And it came out in that hour."

[Acts16:16-18MKJV].

2. **God the only option.** People in trouble who may be experiencing distress or are trapped in some impasse or quandary are advised to pray to God for help and not to resort to the 'help' *(sic)* of psychics, mediums and fortune-tellers. Here's the deal: If God will not help you the psychic does not even have as much as the proverbial 'snowball's hope'. Besides ... who in his or her right mind wants to know the future anyway? Few are those who would bear such an enormous cosmic burden without probably going insane. 'One day at a time' may have been a popular gospel song, but it also spoke volumes about the realities of life for mortal humanity on earth.

The recipe for help in times of need or distress is plain, i.e., to consult the Holy Spirit, not the 'spirits of the dead':

> *"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."*
>
> [Matthew6:6KJV].

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Chapter 45

DON'T TRUST THE PSYCHICS

1. **Trusting Psychics.** Incredibly many still base their hopes on psychics and individuals claiming all kinds of paranormal gifts and talents.

Trusting psychics is a 'grievous fault', to say the least. Now, admittedly there obviously is merit for scientific experiments in the field of the paranormal, but as far as the 'trades' *(sic)* of 'fortune-tellers', 'seers', 'psychics' etc. are concerned my advice still remains: *Stay away ... don't trust the psychics.*

For instance, where were they when the Titanic (or the Twin Towers [9/11]) went down? Or, when the Rwanda massacre happened? Coming out on television and sharing all kinds of harrowing stories of how such and such a 'psychic' had 'seen' these tragedies happen in a vision in advance is of absolutely zero utility value; solutions 'after the fact' do not count.

Where was that psychic (parachuted in *after the fact* to solve some mysterious cold case) at the time when the crime went down ... why didn't he or she prevent that crime from happening in the first place? Opportunists, most of them, and the most disappointing kind those who write columns ("Your Horoscope for the Year 2022', or, "'What the Stars foretell") for popular magazines and newspapers.

2. **A Case in Point.** When the hunt for the infamous 'Yorkshire Ripper', Peter Sutcliffe (who was serving a 'Whole Life Order' sentence and who died in 2020 from Covid-19) was begun, some 'psychics' (cranks?) reportedly had come to the fore offering their insights to the investigating officers. Some insights on the 'profile of the perpetrator' were:

2.1 **Medium.**

"The Yorkshire Ripper is 5'8" tall, is called Johnnie or Ronnie, has a scar below his left eye with a balding patch which he tries to disguise by brushing his long, mousey hair over it. He is clean shaven, his surname begins with the letter 'M', has received psychiatric treatment in a mental hospital and lives in a street named Berwick, or Bewick."

[Doris Stokes].

2.2 **Psychic Detective.**

"The Ripper also walks with a limp because of a damaged right knee and lives in a block of service flats over a garage in Sunderland."

[Gerard Croiset].

2.3 **Clairvoyant.**

"He wears a black duffelcoat with white letters RN, works on a nuclear submarine, changes his clothes in an abandoned railway coach and his home is the top flat in a rundown grey house overlooking a railway tunnel." (Brown: 41).

[Patrick Barnard].

3. **The Arrest.** Despite these ambitious efforts by the psychics of the day, the Yorkshire Ripper, Peter, Sutcliffe, was arrested on 2 January 1981, and contrary to the profiles as submitted by them' he:

3.1 *"was dark-haired with a full beard.*

3.2 *"was not called Johnnie or Ronnie.*

3.3 *"didn't live in Berwick or Bewick Street.*

3.4 *"had never received psychiatric treatment.*

3.5 *"wasn't a submariner.*

3.6 *"didn't walk with a limp.*

3.7 *"never frequented abandoned railway coaches.*

3.8 *"was a truck driver; and*

3.9 *"didn't live in a house above a tunnel."*

[Brown: 42].

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Chapter 46

WHAT THAT PSYCHIC NEVER TOLD YOU

1. **What that psychic forgot to tell you.** So, perhaps you have been to a psychic to have your 'fortune' told or 'horoscope' drawn up and now you are waiting for the dark and handsome stranger (or gorgeous brunette) to cross your path as the psychic so solemnly had 'seen' (lied).

What you are about to find out, however, are the things she never told you about Creation and life in the Universe ... in fact, her sins of *omission* (the things she so conveniently had neglected to tell you) may be far worse than her sins of *commission* (the lies she had told you).

2. **Nine Critical Things that Psychics usually will never tell their 'Clients'.**

2.1 **God (the Father) loves Jesus Christ and honours Him as His Son and the Saviour of the World.**

> *"And there was a cloud that overshadowed them. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, <u>This is My beloved Son</u>. <u>Hear Him</u>. And suddenly, looking around, they did not see anyone any more, except Jesus alone with themselves."*
>
> [Mark 9:7-8MKJV].

> *" While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And behold a voice out of the cloud which said, '<u>This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased</u>, <u>hear Him</u>'. And when the disciples heard, they fell on their face and were greatly terrified."*
>
> [Matthew 17:5-6MKJV].

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"For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all the things that He Himself does. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and makes alive, even so the Son of Man makes alive whomever He wills. For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, so that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."

[John 5:20-23MKJV].

2.2 God (the Father) will honour those who honour His Son Jesus Christ.

"For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, so that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him ... If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant shall be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

[John 5:22-23; 12:26MKJV].

"Therefore Jesus also, so that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By Him, then, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, confessing His [JESUS'] name."

[Hebrews 13:12-15MKJV].

"Because if you confess the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Everyone believing on Him shall not be put to shame."

[Romans 10:9-11MKJV].

2.3 Jesus Christ honours His Heavenly Father and has consistently taught only that which His Father had told Him to speak.

"He who speaks of himself seeks his own glory, but he who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him ... Jesus answered, I do not have a demon, but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me ... Jesus spoke these words and lifted up His eyes to Heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son so that Your Son also may glorify You, even as You have given Him authority over all flesh so that He should give eternal life to all You have given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent ... Then Jesus said to Peter, Put up your sword into the sheath. The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

[John 7:18; 8:49; 17:1; 18:11MKJV].

2.4 At the time of His Second Coming, Jesus Christ will honour (reward) those who had honoured Him in life.

"So it shall be at the end of the world. The angels shall come out and separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth ... For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He shall reward each one according to his works ... And then the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in the heavens. And then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."

[Matthew 13:49-50; 16:27; 24:30-31MKJV].

2.5 Jesus Christ will, at the time of the Second Coming, also be ashamed of those who had been ashamed of Him in life.

"For whoever will save his life shall lose it; but whoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, he shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Therefore whoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words in this

adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man shall also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

[Mark 8:35-38MKJV].

2.6 Those who wilfully reject Jesus Christ today on purpose do so at their own risk and probably will eventually perish (die) in their sins.

"So it shall be at the end of the world. The angels shall come out and separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth ... And He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink all of it. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins ... Therefore be it known to you, men, brothers, that through this One the forgiveness of sins is announced to you. And by Him all who believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses ... And now what do you intend? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

[Matthew 13:49-50; 26:27-28; Acts 13:38-39; 22:16MKJV].

"And He said to them, You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you shall die in your sins, for if you do not believe that I AM, you shall die in your sins."

[John 8:23-24MKJV].

"Faithful is the Word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

[1 Timothy 1:15MKJV].

2.7 The day will break when Jesus Christ comes to fetch those who had loved His appearance to live with Him in His Father's 'House of Many Mansions'.

"*Now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but also to all those who love His appearing."*

[2 Timothy 4:8MKJV].

"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that where I am, you may be also."

[John 14:2-3MKJV].

"*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

[Romans 6:23MKJV].

2.8 **God does not approve of psychics at all** ('mediums', 'clairvoyants', 'fortune-tellers' etc.)

"You shall not turn to mediums, and you shall not seek to spirit-knowers to be defiled by them. I am Jehovah your God."

[Leviticus19:31MKJV].

"And the soul that turns to mediums, and to spirit-knowers, to go lusting after them, I will even set My face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. AND you shall sanctify yourselves, and be holy. For I am Jehovah your God. And you shall keep My statutes and do them. I, Jehovah, sanctify you."

[Leviticus 20:6-8MKJV].

"When you come to the land which Jehovah your God gives you, you shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, an observer of clouds, or a fortune-teller, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or one who calls to the dead. For all that do these things are an abomination to Jehovah. And because of these abominations Jehovah your God drives them out from before you. You shall be perfect with Jehovah your God.""

[Deuteronomy18:9-13MKJV].

"And as we went to prayer, it happened that a certain girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by divining. The same followed Paul and us and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the Most High God, who are announcing to us the way of salvation.

"And she did this many days. But being distressed, and turning to the demonic spirit, Paul said, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her! And it came out in that hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain went out, having seized Paul and Silas, they dragged them to the market before the rulers."

[Acts16:16-19MKJV].

2.9 Reassurance about the future comes from God, not from psychics!

Psalm 15. *"Psalm of David. Jehovah, who shall dwell in Your tabernacle? Who shall dwell on Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor; in whose eyes the reprobate is despised, but he honors those who fear Jehovah; he has sworn to his hurt, and does not change it; he has not put out his money at interest, nor has he taken a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall not be moved forever."*

[Psalm15:1-5 MKJV].

"A Psalm of David. Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever."

[Psalm23:1-6 MKJV].

"I will lift up my eyes to the hills. Where shall my help come from? My help comes from Jehovah, who made Heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. Jehovah is your keeper; Jehovah is your shade on your

right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. Jehovah shall keep you from all evil; He shall keep your soul. Jehovah shall keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore."

[Psalm121:1-8 MKJV].

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Chapter 47

WHY CHRISTIANS DON'T WASTE THEIR TIME WITH SPIRITUALISM

1. **It's A Free Country.** I believe in the sacrosanct principle of the *freedom of religion* provided people do not break the law in the process; in other words, I will never support the dictatorial banning of any religion outright unless the practices of some cult had become totally dysfunctional, antisocial, illegal or dangerous like we so often observe in superstition-driven South Africa and elsewhere.

> **Definition (Spiritualism).** *'A religious movement based on the belief that the spirits of the dead exist and have both the ability and the inclination to communicate with the living. The after-life, or the 'spirit world', is seen by 'spiritualists' not as a static place, but as one in which 'spirits continue to evolve'.*
>
> [Wikipedia].

Having said that, below follow some reasons why Christians nevertheless do not waste their time with *'Spiritualism':*

1.1 **Evangelical Christians do not support 'Evolutionism'.** The word 'evolve' (in the expression, 'spirits continue to evolve') smacks of *Darwinism,* an ideology rejected by Evangelical Christians.

1.2 **There is no need for spiritualists to 'prove' the Afterlife.** The Bible is replete with teaching about the 'Afterlife'. Christ's entire ministry hinged upon the *Hope of Resurrection* as demonstrated by His own resurrection from

the dead, the appearance of *Moses & Elijah* with Christ on the *Mount of Transfiguration* etc.

"And after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain apart. And He was transfigured before them. And His face shone as the sun, and His clothing was white as the light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

"And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You will, let us make here three tabernacles; one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And behold a voice out of the cloud which said, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear Him. And when the disciples heard, they fell on their face and were greatly terrified.

"And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise and do not be terrified. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus alone. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead."

[Matthew17:1-9MKJV].

1.3 **It is impossible for the 'Dead' to make contact with 'Earthlings'.** A great and uncrossable chasm separates earthlings from those who have passed on to the other side (and Jesus Christ never lied). Those who do purport to make 'contact with the other side' are either being deceived or probably introduced to demons impersonating their deceased loved ones. The conversation between Abraham and the deceased rich man on the 'other side' demonstrates the impossibility for the dead to make contact with the living:

"There was a certain rich man who was customarily clothed in purple and fine linen and making merry in luxury every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate,

full of sores and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

"But even the dogs came and licked his sores. And it happened that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich one also died and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

"And he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, there is a great chasm fixed between you and us; so that they desiring to pass from here to you cannot, nor can they pass over to us from there.'

"And he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them.'

"And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if one should go to them from the dead, they would repent.' And he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded, even though one rose from the dead.' "

[Luke16:19-31MKJV].

1.4 **The Bible forbids efforts to make 'contact' with the so-called 'spirits of the dead'.** God takes a dim view (to say the least) of people dabbling in such practices ('abominations') as e.g., 'spiritualism'.

"You shall not turn to mediums, and you shall not seek to spirit-knowers to be defiled by them. I am Jehovah your God."

[Leviticus19:31MKJV].

"When you come to the land which Jehovah your God gives you, you shall not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses

divination, an observer of clouds, or a fortune-teller, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or one who calls to the dead.

"For all that do these things are an abomination to Jehovah. And because of these abominations Jehovah your God drives them out from before you. You shall be perfect with Jehovah your God. For these nations whom you shall possess listened to observers of clouds and to diviners. But as for you, Jehovah your God has not allowed you to do so."

[Deuteronomy18:9-14MKJV].

"And when they shall say to you, Seek to the mediums and to wizards who peep and mutter; should not a people seek to their God, than for the living to the dead?"

[Isaiah8:19MKJV].

1.5 **The Holy Spirit is sufficient.** Jesus Christ has sent the Holy Spirit, i.e., the 'Paraclete' ('Comforter' or 'One called alongside to help') for our moral support in times of crisis or for spiritual knowledge, wisdom & growth.

"I indeed baptize you with water to repentance. But He who comes after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire; whose fan is in His hand, and He will cleanse His floor and gather His wheat into the storehouse; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

[Matthew3:11-12MKJV].

"I indeed have baptized you in water, but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

"But whenever they lead you away and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what you should speak or think. But speak whatever shall be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speaks, but the Holy Spirit."

[Mark1:8; 13:11MKJV].

"But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you."

[John14:26MKJV].

"But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."
[1Corinthians2:10-11MKJV].

"For prophecy was not borne at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke being borne along by the Holy Spirit."

"For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one."

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit."
[2Peter1:21]; 1John5:7; Jude1:20MKJV].

"These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

"... in whom also you, hearing the Word of Truth, the gospel of our salvation, in whom also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed until the day of redemption."

"Guard the good Deposit given through the Holy Spirit indwelling in us."

"God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with different kinds of miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"

"For the free gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

"Then having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, if prophecy, according to the proportion of faith ..."

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I would not have you ignorant."

"But there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit."
[1Corinthians2:13; Ephesians1:13; 4:30;
2Timothy1:14; Hebrews2:4; Romans11:29; 12:6;
1Corinthians12:1,4MKJV].

2. **Enters Harry Houdini.** Harry Houdini (1874-1926), the great escape artist, has during his lifetime built up quite a reputation

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for exposing fraudulent spiritualists in the 'Spiritualism industry' that apparently was fraught with trickery and deception.

P.S. See article, *'Houdini, The Hunter of Fake Ghosts'* [Open Mind, 24 March 2018].

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Chapter 48

WHY I WON'T WASTEMY TIME WITH NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY

1. **New Age Spirituality Profile (NAS).** NAS focuses on *Mind, Body & Spirit.* Influenced by such movements as *Spiritualism, New Thought & Theosophy;* examples of familiar 'mantras' from the NAS corner may include:

- *"God is everything!"*
- *"All things are one!"*
- *"Man is God"*
- *"Mind creates reality!"*
- *"One's own experiences validates the truth!"*

[Crosswalk.com, Wikipedia].

It is an interesting coincidence that Adolf Hitler was also an ardent admirer of Madame Blavatsky, founder of the *Theosophical Society* in 1875. Other movements also reminiscent of New Age Spirituality are e.g., the 1960s *'Counterculture'* movements (e.g., the *Human Potential Movement, Holism* and the plethora of *UFO religions.* The *'Church of Scientology'* is also seen as just another UFO religion.

P.S. The word 'Church' ['Ecclesia'] has become iconic only to Christianity which renders the Scientologists' and 'Free Spirit' movement occasional use and application of the term wholly disingenuous & improper.

2. **Atheism-Evolutionism.** *Classical Atheistic Darwinism* has over the years (since Darwin's first 1959 book) 'evolved' into a fairy tale for adults who had never grown up; to add further insult to injury, it has now even evolved into another separate hybrid form, i.e. *Creative Theistic Evolutionism* (that believes that God created the 'Evolution' the created the Cosmos), an ideology in total opposition to *Classical Atheism Darwinism* (that believes that Evolution created the cosmos and mankind along with all his imagined 'gods').

Do the math: Since these two opposing views are mutually exclusive and cannot both be right (valid) at the same time, which one is thus the valid view, if any one at all? Be that as it may, this organisation is of the opinion that *(i) Darwinism is nothing else but Scientific Pantheism (the worship of the triumvirate of Father TIME ('millions of years'), Mother NATURE (natural selection, adaptation, speciation) Charles DARWIN (Evolution's 'messiah')* and that *(ii) Creative Evolution is a totally unfeasible idea.*

3.1 NAS ('New Age Spirituality') tries to reinvent the wheel, and that while wheels can 'revolve' but not 'evolve' (wheels and circles cannot get any 'more rounder').

3.2 The Bible and Jesus Christ have already said all we need to know about who created the Cosmos; who we are; where we come from; what we are doing here; what we should believe and do to be saved; who Heaven's *de facto* Mediator is between man and God (i.e., Jesus Christ); how to discern between right & wrong; where we are going and whether there is life after death.

3.3 It is clear from the 'mantras' in *Paragraph 1* that NAS is nothing more than just another confused urban cult founded

on some hybrid mix of *pantheism* and *humanism,* both ideological 'strains' rejected by most Evangelical Christians I know.

3.4 NAS puts a high premium on such values as *Happiness, Creativity & Fulfilment.* Fair enough ... why then not come to the Master of Happiness, Creativity & Fulfilment, Jesus Christ? All people are going to bow before Jesus Christ someday anyway, why not now while the going is good?

"For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' "
[Romans14:11MKJV].
"... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly ones, and of earthly ones, and of ones under the earth."
[Philippians2:10MKJV].

4. **Conclusion.** Fiddling around with NAS ('New Age Spirituality') instead of simply bowing before and following Jesus Christ is akin to adults sitting in the dirt baking boring, messy and tasteless 'mud cakes' while Christians are baking muffins from fresh flour fresh and hot from the oven in the kitchen. Why bother with the 'fake version' when you can have the genuine article? Jesus Christ invites today:

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
[John10:9-10MKJV].

Chapter 49

WHY I WON'T WASTE MY TIME WITH SCIENTOLOGY

1. **Wisdom & Knowledge.** According to an online FAQ page, Scientology is the study of 'wisdom' and 'knowledge'. That being so, then why does Scientology refuse to acknowledge the YHWH (Jehovah) of Moses & Mt. Sinai as their (so-called) 'Supreme Being' and/or 'Eighth Dynamic'? The Bible says:

1.1. WISDOM:

"And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom."

[Job28:28aKJV].

1.2 KNOWLEDGE:

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

[JProverbs1:7KJV].

The answer is simple: They cannot afford to acknowledge the LORD of Moses and Mt. Sinai because then they will have to be consistent and acknowledge the BIBLE as their ultimate *Source of Authority & Moral Compass*, which they adamantly refuse to do.

2. **Scientology's 'Immortal Spiritual Being'.** They say:

"Scientology helps each being to regain awareness of himself or herself as an immortal spiritual being and the rehabilitation of full spiritual potential — to achieve a recognition of spiritual existence and one's relationship to the Supreme Being. God is identified in Scientology as the Eighth Dynamic."

['What Is Scientology'. Online].

2.1 Critical thinking: Which 'god' are they referring to? If it were the God of Moses and Mt. Sinai (i.e., YHWH, Jehovah or the 'I AM') they would (i) have clearly said so and (ii) would have acknowledged the Bible as their Source of Authority. Be that as it may, if this be the case (i.e., that man is an 'immortal spiritual being') then why do they say:

"The goal of life can be considered to be infinite survival. That man seeks to survive has long been known, but that it is his primary motivation is new. Man, as a life form, can be demonstrated to obey in all his actions and purposes the one command: 'SURVIVE!'"

[What Is Scientology. Online].

This extraordinary reference to and emphasis on the concept and term of 'survival', an 'evaluative absurdity' involving the struggle for 'survival' by beings who are supposedly 'immortal' by default anyway, spells only one thing, i.e., Scientology's slavish subservience and devotion to the absurdity of the Darwinism (Evolutionism) cult.

2.2 Critical thinking: If man is an *immortal spiritual being*, why the desperate need to 'survive' ... won't he by default anyway 'survive' because of his 'immortality'?

Anomalous, illogical statements like these and the complete disowning of the moral laws, precepts and principles of our time-tested Judeo-Christian tradition and values puts Scientology (registered as a bona fide 'church') in the arena of a false religious cult, and the Bible explicitly warns against Christians' gullible

subservience to false (another, deceiving) 'Christs' and a (another, deceiving) false 'spirits' and 'gospels':

> *"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."*
>
> [2Corinthians11:4KJV].
>
> "*If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. The Lord comes! ... But even if we or an angel from Heaven preach a gospel to you beside what we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we said before, and now I say again, If anyone preaches a gospel to you beside what you have received, let him be accursed."*
>
> [1Corinthians16:22; Galatians1:8-9MKJV].

2.3 Critical thinking: Scientology rejects the Bible as the *Ultimate Moral Authority* and the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the *Ultimate Cure for Apostasy & Sin;* in other words, metaphorically speaking Scientology erroneously preaches *(i) 'another Jesus',* (*ii) 'another spirit'* and *(iii) 'another Gospel'.*

3. **Scientology does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God.** Scientology teaches that man is *basically good* and that 'salvation' depends on himself and his fellows' [What Is Scientology. Online] whereas Christianity teaches that man is *basically sinful* and needs to repent, believe the Gospel and accept Jesus Christ as Saviour for Salvation and Eternal Life.

The Bible teaches that Salvation is a Gift and not thanks to man's own 'meritorious' effort to pick himself up by his own bootstraps:

> *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*
>
> [Romans6:23MKJV].

> *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him ... Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life! He who believes in Me, though he die, yet he shall live."*
>
> [John3:16-17; 11:25MKJV].

4. **Summary.** The fact that Scientology teaches/preaches:

(i) an unidentified 'Supreme Being' while rejecting the Judeo-Christian heritage of the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(ii) the philosophical anomaly of so-called 'immortal' man's desperate need to 'survive' (despite his so-called 'immortality'!) and

(iii) that man is 'basically good'

catapults Scientology straight into the arena of a cult founded on Darwinism and Secular Humanism, in sharp contrast to what Judaism and Christianity teaches. Jesus Christ has issued a stern warning:

> *"And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many will come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and will deceive many ... And many false prophets will rise and deceive many ... And this gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all nations. And then the end shall come ... For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders; so much so that, if it were possible, they would deceive even the elect ... But as the days of Noah were, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark. And they did not know until the flood came and took them all away. So also will be the coming of the Son of Man."*
>
> [Matthew24:4,5,11,14,24,37-39MKJV].

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Chapter 50

WHY I TRUST JESUS CHRIST WITH MY FUTURE

1. **Trusting His Heart.** Charles Spurgeon is reported to have said:

> *"God is too good to be unkind and too wise to be confused; even though we cannot always trace God's Hand, we can still trust His Heart!"*

I firmly believe in (and cling to it as if my life depends on it) God's immortal promise:

> *"For I know the purposes which I am purposing for you, says Jehovah; purposes of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope"*
>
> [Jeremiah29:11MKJV].

2. **Reasons for Trusting Jesus Christ with my Future.** Reasons are many and may include:

2.1 The emergence of false Christs *('avatars', 'gurus', 'swamis', 'god-men' etc.).*

2.2 Wars & rumours of wars; nations & kingdoms rising against each other.

2.3 Famines all over the globe.

2.4 Pestilences all over the world *(Pandemics; epidemics; plagues).*

2.5 The harassment, persecution and even killing of Christians and destruction of Churches; WW2 Holocaust; Stalin's pogroms; Mao's persecutions; Communists' genocide of citizens; terrorist murder of Jews and Christians etc. postmodernism and the rejection of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world and Messiah of the Jews etc.

2.6 The worldwide avalanche of iniquity *(vice, crime, immorality, injustice, racism, discrimination, secular humanism, suburban satanism, false cults, government & big business corruption and tender collusion etc.).*

2.7 'Signs' in heaven from the sun, moon and stars *(natural as well as signs from space exploration, research and travel).*

2.8 Anxiety among nations in sea and waves 'roaring' *(killer-floods; tsunamis; typhoons, cyclones etc.).*

2.9 Droughts and famines.

2.10 Pandemics, disease etc.

2.11 Earthquakes, natural disasters etc.

3. **Prophecies by Jesus Christ.** The phenomena as mentioned above are occurring exactly as Jesus Christ prophesied.

> *"And as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no man deceive*

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you. For many will come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and will deceive many.

"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled, for all these things must occur; but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in different places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

"Then they will deliver you up to be afflicted and will kill you. And you will be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, and will betray one another, and will hate one another. And many false prophets will rise and deceive many.

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many will become cold. But he who endures to the end, the same shall be kept safe. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all nations. And then the end shall come.

"Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand). Then let those in Judea flee into the mountains. Let him on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; nor let him in the field turn back to take his clothes.

"And woe to those who are with child, and to those who give suck in those days! But pray that your flight is not in the winter, nor on the sabbath day; for then shall be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be.

"And unless those days should be shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ! Or, There! Do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders; so much so that, if it were possible, they would deceive even the elect.

"Behold, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they shall say to you, Behold, He is in the desert! Do not go out. Behold, He is in the secret rooms! Do not believe it. For as the lightning comes out of the east and shines even to the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered.

"And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in the heavens. And then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory.

"And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When its branch is still tender and puts out leaves, you know that summer is near. So you, likewise, when you see all these things, shall know that it is near, at the doors.

"Truly I say to you, This generation shall not pass until all these things are fulfilled. The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not the angels of Heaven, but only My Father.

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark. And they did not know until the flood came and took them all away. So also will be the coming of the Son of Man.

"Then two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Therefore watch; for you do not know what hour your Lord comes.

"But know this, that if the steward of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be dug through. Therefore you also be ready, for in that hour you think not, the Son of Man comes. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord has made ruler over His household, to give them food in due season?

"Blessed is that servant whom his Lord shall find him doing so when He comes. Truly I say to you that He shall make him ruler over all His goods. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delays His coming, and shall begin to strike his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that

servant shall come in a day when he does not look for Him, and in an hour which he does not know.

"And He shall cut him apart and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

[Matthew24:3-51MKJV].

[Also see Mark13:1-37 and Luke5-38].

4. **Four Irrefutable Proofs.** They are:

4.1 **The worldwide moral decay.** The worldwide decline of and decay in morality & ethics, so aptly demonstrated by all the decadent Leftist (profanity & blasphemy) driven films from Hollywood. People are getting 'filthier' (audiences included) exactly as the Bible anticipated.

"He acting unjustly, let him still act unjustly. And the filthy, let him be filthy still. And the righteous, let him be righteous still. And the holy, let him be holy still."

[Revelation.22:11MKJV].

4.2 **The woman with the costly ointment.** The celebration of the woman who had poured the priceless ointment on Jesus' feet remembered today all over the world where the Gospel is preached, exactly as Jesus prophesied (in fact, here am I doing it now too).

"And when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him, having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head as He reclined. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

"For this ointment might have been sold for very much and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, He said to them, Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work on Me. For you have the poor with you always, but you do not always have Me.

"For in putting ointment on My body, she did it for My burial. Truly I say to you, Wherever this gospel shall be proclaimed

in the whole world, that which this woman has done shall be spoken of also, for a memorial of her."

[Matthew26:6-13MKJV].

4.3 **Preaching of the Gospel.** The worldwide preaching & publication of the Gospel.

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all nations. And then the end shall come."

[Matthew24:14MKJV].

4.4 **The Immortal Words of Jesus Christ.** The immortal words of Jesus Christ that no force in the world has ever succeeded to extinguish or silence ... where we look the Gospel is being preached! Jesus has solemnly promised:

"The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away."

[Matthew24:35MKJV].

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PART THREE: CONSECRATION

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Chapter 51

THE PERFECTION DEMANDED BY GOD

1. **The Apostle's Admonition.** The admonition is clear:

> *"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."*
> [1Peter1:16KJV].

2. **The Word of God is Indispensable.** The Bible says:

> *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."*
> [2Timothy3:16-17KJV].

3. **Jesus Christ has Warned.** Bear in mind that, during the days of Jesus' ministry on earth, the Scribes and the Pharisees were the most exemplary of ecclesiastics in Israel, supposedly the epitome of religious piousness, holiness and moral excellence; many of them, like *Nicodemus* ('a ruler of the Jews') and *Joseph of Arimathaea* ('an honourable counsellor') surely must have been. Yet, Jesus Christ has still solemnly warned:

> *"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."*
> [Matthew5:20KJV].

4. **The Perfection demanded by God.** The glorious perfection of Him who is absolutely & infinitely holy and God ('YHWH'; 'Yahweh', 'Jehovah') is so resplendent that the Jews did not even dare to speak His Name (hence the tetragrammaton of **יהוה** ... read from right to left ... or 'YHWH'); God Himself has admonished:

> *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*
>
> [Isaiah55:8-9KJV].

It thus came as no surprise when Jesus said that, <u>except our righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees</u>, we <u>shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven</u>. The million-rouble question: Alas, who will then ever make it? When Jesus was asked this question, He replied:

> *"With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."*
>
> [Matthew19:26bKJV].

5. **The Cosmic Rescue of Mankind from Eternal Damnation.** Given the (impossible) demand for holiness of such proportions the Apostle Paul then rises to the occasion and explains:

> *"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come ... For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive ... And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [JESUS] was made a quickening spirit."*
>
> [Romans5:14; 1Corinthians15:22, 45KJV].

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There was no way we would ever be able to rise to the holiness and moral perfection demanded by God, so, when we, a fallen race not worth dying for, could not pick ourselves up by our own bootstraps to rise to the level of perfection demanded by God, Jesus Christ died for us while we were still yet sinners *to make us worth dying for!*

There is only way by which our righteousness could ever exceed the righteousness of conniving, first-century Pharisees, and that righteousness is ensconced in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The vicarious (substitutionary) death of Christ for the sins of the world (i.e., for those who accept Him as Saviour & LORD and 'obey' Him) explained:

> *"Though he [JESUS] were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him ... The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."*
>
> [Hebrew5:8-9; Psalm19:7KJV].
>
> *"For we yet being without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will with difficulty die for a righteous one, yet perhaps one would even dare to die for a good one.*
>
> *"But God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*
>
> *"For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation."*
>
> [Romans5:6-11MKJV].
>
> *"I [JESUS CHRIST] have spoken these things to you so that you might have peace in Me. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."*
>
> [John16:33MKJV].

Chapter 52

THE POWER OF SURRENDER

1. **Good news.** The good news is that there is tremendous power in helplessness and weakness, because when we are weak (especially for Christ's sake) God's power is made perfect in us. The Apostle Paul writes:

> *"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."*
>
> [2Corinthians12:10KJV].

2. **Two options only.** I have learnt, from bitter experience, that there are only two ways to go (besides the regulation 'fight or flight' response) when one is perplexed or confounded and really do not know what to do amidst that awful sense of 'overwhelmingtosis', or total helplessness, as follows:

2.1 **Option #1.** The first option is to worry and then act instinctively in the hope that something will 'turn up'. This usually is the classic response of the *(i) pagan unbeliever* and/or *(ii) impulsive, novice believer.*

2.2 **Option #2.** The second option is to pray and act intuitively in the good faith that God will take care of things and, if we faithfully follow the Holy Spirit's promptings of duty, we will be helped at the right time. It will, however, always be a 'response' or 'solution' to the problem as defined by God, and not necessarily as defined by us.

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2.3 **Hybrid options.** Just as believers may sometimes opt for w*orrying* over *praying, the* 'hybrid version' of the two options discussed here would be where the pagan unbeliever too would for instance choose to *pray* instead of *worry,* a remarkable, but apparently not uncommon, phenomenon indeed. The sad reality is that he will probably be praying to some mythical deity of absolute zero utility value or consequence, instead of to God.

I once read about this passenger cruiser at sea where one of the passengers during rough seas had fallen overboard and was struggling for his life in the tempestuous waves, with passengers egging on the lifesaver to dive in and save the man. The lifesaver, however, appeared hesitant and unsure, even afraid, notwithstanding the insults and the oaths from outraged passengers and crew aimed at him, for the sea was wild. It was only when the drowning man appeared to be no longer struggling did the lifesaver jump in to save him.

His explanation was that it is always very dangerous to try and save a struggling swimmer in danger of drowning, for such a person was quite capable of drowning not only himself but also his rescuer; it is only when the struggling man's energy had just about all dissipated could the diver safely dive to save him. It is all about the principle of 'surrender'.

Christians should *pray and act intuitively* while in the process exercising *patience, discretion* and the art and science of *'waiting faith' ('surrender')* for the ideal outcome over time. Charles Spurgeon is reported to have said:

"God is too good to be cruel and too wise to be confused. Although we cannot always trace God's Hand, we can still trust His Heart!"

William Cowper has said:

"God moves in many a mysterious way His wonders to perform; He plants His footprint in the sea and rides upon the storm!"

The Bible says:

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need ... But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is [i.e., EXISTS] and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

[Hebrews4:16; 11:6MKJV].

"But you, when you pray, enter into your room. And shutting your door, pray to your Father in secret; and your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly."

[Matthew6:6MKJV].

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Chapter 53

THE SCIENCE OF HUMILITY

1. **The Failure of 'Scientism'.** Science can be a good servant, but a bad master; it can either invent new technologies to make our lives easier (and more interesting) or invent far more lethal weapons with which to devastate nations and cause collateral damage during war. The propensity by naturalists, materialists and secular humanists to swear by science (i.e., 'Scientism') as the ultimate solution to all of society's problems and challenges has failed miserably.

> ***Scientism:*** *'methods and attitudes typical of or attributed to the natural scientist' / 'an exaggerated trust in the efficacy of the methods of natural science applied to all areas of investigation (as in philosophy, the social sciences, and the humanities)'.*
> [Merriam-Webster].

2. **The Science of Humility.** I once read this interesting anecdote about the wealthy industrialist and business tycoon who lay dying in his bed in this palatial mansion and with his servants and personal valet of decades, Old Tom, tending to his needs in the sunset of his life.

Widely known as a proud, irreligious and cantankerous old bigot with no fear of God or man, his illness, however, must have softened him up somewhat, and over the months he had grown more mellow toward others ... it has become clear that he was approaching his last days on earth and, gravely concerned, had increasingly turned to his valet Tom, a devout Christian, for moral support:

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Tycoon: *"Will God ever forgive me for my sin; what must I do to earn His forgiveness? I've been so hard on people ... what must I do?"*

Old Tom: *"Sir, the Bible teaches that all that God expects from us is for us to lay aside our pride, be humble and repent; if we confess our sins, He is more than willing to forgive us all our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Tycoon: *"Tom, what do you mean 'humble' ... how humble?"*

Old Tom: *"Humble enough to, for instance, get up out of bed, walk to that filthy pigsty outside, kneel down in the dirt, repent and pray for God's forgiveness!"*

Tycoon: *"Then Tom, quickly, help me up ... I must go now, immediately!"*

Old Tom: *"Oh, no sir, that won't be necessary; all I meant was for you to be just 'willing' to go to the pigsty to kneel down and repent ... by now God has probably forgiven you already!"*

3. **The evildoer on the cross.** The evildoer on the cross, i.e., the one who had shown compassion to Jesus Christ, was saved instantly only with his 'death sentence' commuted on the spot (by the Author and Prince of Life) to a 'life sentence' ... Everlasting Life! What can be easier than that?

"Verily I say unto you, today thou shall be with me in Paradise!"

Had that evildoer been able to climb down the cross, repent on the spot, be baptised and join a church he probably would have done so; but, since he couldn't, his fledgling faith

was anyway still reckoned to him as righteousness ... desperate times truly call for desperate measures. The Bible says:

"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says, God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble."

[James4:6MKJV].

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Chapter 54

TO BE LIKE JESUS (REALLY?)

1. **To be like Jesus Christ.** Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ and Son of God, is the most successful person to have ever walked this earth. The idea of becoming or being like Jesus is therefore a noble thought and commendable goal for Christian and even for non-Christian alike.

2. **True sophistication.** True sophistication is rare. A friend of ours always used to say that he has a Number #10 size mouth; he could know that (he explained) because his Size #10 shoe fits so perfectly in his mouth.

Very few of us have had the privilege of attending a 'finishing school', and not all of those who have anyway attended it ever seem to have come out perfect either ... I suspect the finishing school thoroughly 'finished' some of us, all right.

3. **The standard of a Jesus Christ.** The standard of the life, career, ministry and character of Jesus Christ was so high and exemplary that in the end and at the time of His resurrection, all reasonable doubt as to the divinity ('divine gravitas') of His standing as the Son of God was removed; even had He not been the Son of God He then still (hypothetically speaking) must have played the role of the so-called 'imposter-messiah' so well that He still will have deserved the world's admiration far and wide, if not actual adoration and worship, for such an 'Oscar performance' in acting as the atheists would want us to believe.

His uniqueness, however, was/is of such an august nature that, as the saying goes, *"Only a real Jesus Christ could have forged a (so-called) fake Jesus Christ!"*

4. **Can humans (Christians) attain that kind of perfection?** Here is a true and candid confession: During the early 1990s I went to God and confessed to Him that I was giving up on trying to be like Christ; I was totally exhausted from trying to live the '*What would Jesus do'* armband philosophy and struggling with my (so-called) 'midlife crisis' ... I was just about on the brink of collapse.

If God, our Heavenly Father, were not going to condescend and support, guide and empower me for the walk in Christ I am simply going to abandon it all together and cast my life, my testimony and all my ludicrous and futile efforts to live a holy, consecrated, pious and exemplary life to the wind.

5. **The education.** I think (and surmise) that God must have started educating me the way He did with Job in Job chapters 37-42; for, during the following seasons and years I began to realise that, had it been possible for born-again Christians to become (100%) like Christ in this life, the work, life, ministry, sacrifice, blood and resurrection of Jesus Christ would have been totally unnecessary and superfluous.

Jesus Christ did not die for us because were worth dying for in the first place (on the contrary); He died for us because He wanted to, needed to *make us worth dying for.* Now that He has given His life for us, will He not protect and fight for us (if it was possible and necessary at all) to the death again? After all, He did it for us when we were still sinners; how much more will He then also not again do it for us now that we are children of God?

If Salvation could be earned based on personal merit and exemplary performance, then surely the life and sacrifice of Christ would have been unnecessary and a total waste.

6. **Where do we stand today?** I fully understand the admonition from the Apostle Paul for us to strive to, spiritually, aim to attain the stature of Christ ... it is a valid and noble thought. Jesus Christ, and not our favourite evangelist or Christian apologist ought to be our *de facto* role model. Paul teaches that Christians ought to be engaged in *(i) allowing Christ to be formed in them* and *(ii) 'in building up the Church and one another':*

> *"My children, for whom I again travail until Christ should be formed [Gk. morphoō: form, fashion, morph) in you."*
> [Galatians 4:19MKJV].
>
> *"So then let us pursue the things of peace, and the things for building up one another ... Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good, to building up."*
> [Romans14:19; 15:2MKJV].
>
> *"Even so you, since you are zealots of spiritual things, seek to build up the church, in order that you may abound."*
> [1Corinthians14:12MKJV].
>
> *"For we are glad when we are weak, and you are powerful. But we pray also for this, your perfection ... Finally, brothers, rejoice. Perfect yourselves; encourage yourselves; mind the same thing; be at peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you."*
> [2Corinthians13:9,11MKJV].
>
> *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove by you what is that good and pleasing and perfect will of God."*
> [Romans12:2MKJV].
>
> *"But, we speak wisdom among those who are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, that come to nothing ... But when the perfect thing comes, then that which is in part will be caused to cease."*
> [1Corinthians2:6;13:10MKJV].
>
> *"And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may overshadow me ... For we are glad when we are weak, and you are powerful. But we pray also for this, your perfection ... Finally, brothers,*

rejoice. Perfect yourselves; encourage yourselves; mind the same thing; be at peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you."

[2Corinthians12:9; 13:9,11MKJV].

"Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, do you now perfect yourself in the flesh?

[Galatians3:3MKJV].

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I am pressing on, if I may lay hold of that for which I also was taken hold of by Christ Jesus ... Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be of this mind. And if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you."

[Philippians3:12,15MKJV].

"... whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus ... Epaphras greets you, he being of you, a servant of Christ, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

[Colossians1:28; 4:12MKJV].

"... night and day praying exceedingly for me to see your face and to perfect the things lacking in your faith?"

[1Thessalonians3:10MKJV].

"For it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to perfect the Captain of their salvation through sufferings ...

"Therefore if perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the Law), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? ...

"For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw near to God ...

"For it was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him who did the service perfect as regards the conscience ...

"But when Christ had become a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building ...

"For the Law which has a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things, appearing year by year with the same

sacrifices, which they offer continually, they are never able to perfect those drawing near ...

"For God had provided some better thing for us, that they should not be made perfect without us ...

"To the general assembly and church of the first-born who are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect ...

"Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever." Amen."

[Hebrews2:10; 7:11,19; 9:9,11; 10:1; 11:40; 12:23; 13:21MKJV].

It is thus clear from all these scriptures that the ideal of 'perfection' is something wrought by Jesus Christ through an arduous process on a steep learning curve that may involve obedience, suffering and the transformation and renewing of the mind by the Holy Spirit over time, overshadowed by the perfection of Christ superimposed on our weaknesses.

But, as to the goal of 100% moral perfection in this life founded on exemplary performance? I don't think so. Although we are in principle *sanctified* by the blood and sacrifice (i.e., Righteousness) of Jesus Christ, it nevertheless pertains only to our *legal standing* in Christ before God and not necessarily to our best *moral standard of conduct or behaviour* today.

For those growing despondent as regards their slow or non-existent spiritual progress (i.e., the way I have) always remember that the Bible clearly teaches that:

We will only be like Jesus the day we see Him in Heaven like He is ... and that vision is the vision that inspires us to 'purify' ourselves:

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when He shall be revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He

is. And everyone who has this hope on him purifies himself, even as that One is pure."

[1John3:2,3MKJV].

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PART FOUR: INTERCESSION

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Chapter *55*

PRYAER OF JOB: HERO OF FAITH

1. **Job: Hero of faith.** Millenniums ago, a man by the name of Job was tested and tried by some of the severest forms of adversity and trials any human being could be asked to endure. At the end of his terrible ordeal, he finally had lost 7 sons & 3 daughters, 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 she-asses and a great number of slaves.

2. **Knowledge vs. Faith.** To be truthful, I don't think that there really is such a thing as '100% faith'. Smith Wigglesworth once wrote a book, *Ever Increasing Faith,* and it is true that faith can increase and even increase exponentially provided we read, study and cherish the *Word of God (Bible),* for faith comes by *hearing* the Word of God.

All the praying in the world for 'more faith' won't increase faith one iota unless we read the Bible in conjunction for such praying. The Bible says:

> *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* [Romans10:17KJV].

Faith can thus increase, but, however, only up to a point of say 99% (or to be pedantic, 99.99%); at the 100% level *faith* becomes *knowledge.* Faith is great (the just shall live by faith!) but *knowledge* is even better. After his ordeal and God's sobering speech, Job could at last finally say:

"... I know that You can do all, and not any purpose is withheld from You."

[Job 42:1b-2MKJV].

3. **Did the man Job really exist?** There are some skeptics among theologians who downplay the Book of Job and who believe that Job was a mythical (fictional) character; and, that stories about him was only part of Jewish folklore and thus not real. Nothing could be further than the truth. Here the *disciple James* ('Jacob') affirms the existence of Job:

3.1 **The historical fact of Job affirmed by James (New Testament).**

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

[James 5:11KJV].

3.2 **The historical fact of Job affirmed by Ezekiel (Old Testament).** In the Book of Ezekiel God Himself affirms (twice) the existence of Job just to make sure that the lies about Job would not become too entrenched among Bible scholars:

"And though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD ... though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness."

[Ezekiel14:14; 20MKJV].

P.S. We must be consistent; if we remove *Job* from the equation or from the Biblical narrative then it stands to reason that we must remove *Noah and Daniel* too.

4. **Job's magnificent prayer for posterity.** On one of his worst days, probably past hope for any recovery or remedy, the man Job, history's great hero of faith, must have prayed, penned these now immortal words ... words that were to reverberate through the centuries right up to today and resound unto all Eternity for angels to cherish in the holy libraries and archives of Paradise:

> *"Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."*
>
> [Job19:23-27KJV].

- *Have Job's words been 'written'?* (Yes ... in ancient Biblical manuscripts, some of the most ancient of texts in the world!)

- *Have Job's words been 'printed in a book'?* (Yes ... and not just any book but in the *(Hebrew/Old Testament) Bible,* the *Word of God* and still the world's bestselling book of all times!).

- *Have Job's words been 'graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever'?* (Yes ... what could be more solid and more permanent than the Bible, the Word of God?).

- *Have Job's suffering, words and prayer contributed to the spiritual growth of believers through the ages?* (Yes, as James had written:

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

[James 5:11KJV].

5. **How did Job's story end?** The Bible says that in the end Job again owned 7 sons & 3 daughters, 14000 sheep, 6000 camels, 1000 yoke of oxen and 1000 she-asses. It would appear as if all his 'assets' were doubled except for his sons and daughters ... however, bear in mind that his sons & daughters were not 'doubled' probably because God did not count the deceased children (like the dead and lost livestock) as dead and lost. His final days:

"And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

"So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.

"And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days."

[Job42:10-17KJV].

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Chapter 56

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: THE PRAYER JOURNAL

1. **Introduction.** Imagine how much poorer the world would have been had the old Biblical patriarchs, saints, priests, prophets, statesmen and scribes never written their work down ... we would have been without (among others) the beautiful *Psalms, Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) prophecies, Bible history, wisdom, mighty prayers* and the *Gospels, prophecies* and *Epistles (New Testament)* today. That is why I am an ardent supporter of keeping a *Prayer Journal* for my prayers and intercessions to the Heavenly Father.

2. **Some recommendations on the Prayer Journal.**

2.1 **Steer clear of a fancy 'boutique' Prayer Journal.** I prefer an *ordinary, inexpensive and undated A4 size counter book* that allows me to write intuitively for as long as I choose or that does not expect from me to necessarily make forced and superficial (date-dominated) entries every single day.

2.2 **The Prayer Journal is part of *Spiritual Warfare* against the Adversary.** When Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus rebuked him with: *"It is written ...!"* When we write our (Scripture-supported) prayers down, we are affirming and reinforcing centuries-old *Biblical truths, values and principles* for ourselves, thus also further reinforcing our faith and rebuking the Tempter.

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2.3 **The Prayer Shawl.** Scholars tell us that the old Hebrew, when he wanted to pray during the days of Moses in the *Sinai Wilderness,* especially since the *Wilderness Tabernacle* was not designed to hold millions, thousands or even hundreds of people, he simply would draw his *prayer-shawl* over his head and from that moment onward he was, metaphorically speaking, inside the *Wilderness Tabernacle,* praying in secret to God.

The study of Hebraic roots is an interesting study and to be recommended. Having said that, I am nevertheless not suggesting that Christians should now revert to Judaism or endeavour to become 'honorary Jews'; on the contrary, we pray for Jews to become Messianic Jews instead.

The point I want to make is that for many Christians, our prayer journal may symbolise and function as a *spiritual prayer shawl* for the *Spiritual Tabernacle* from the days of Moses, bearing in mind that I am sharing this only as a personal sentiment, not as formal doctrine. Those who, however, would prefer to invest in a real, traditional Jewish prayer shawl, are obviously welcome to do so; it's a beautiful liturgical tradition to which no reasonable person should have to object.

Once I am in my prayer journal, usually in the wee hours of the morning, I feel safe, protected and confident against the forces of darkness, so much so that no demon from hell will ever succeed (as *Omar Khayyam* had hinted) in luring my finger back even as much as half-a-line or (with all his bloodied tears dripping from gruesome, bloodshot eyes) wiping out a word of anything I may prayerfully write in it.

2.4 **Intercessor Archives.** The prayer journal is ideal for record-keeping; it enables us to pray for people, events, situations and problems with ample space to write down facts, dates and all kinds of detail for later cross-referencing etc.

should the need ever arise, thus also doubling up as a valuable spiritual family 'heirloom' or keepsake that may later be left behind to heirs as an example of dedicated, structured prayer and intercession (and how prayers are often astonishingly answered) for next-of-kin after departure to the *Father's House of Many Mansions.*

2.5 **Free Prayer Minutes.** Bear in mind that devout intercessors have *1440 free prayer minutes per day* that should be utilised wisely, productively and industriously. It can never be carried forward or in any way accumulated with the intention to later make up for lost prayer time; once the day is done those 1440 free prayer minutes are gone forever.

3. **The convenient computer era.** The tips and recommendations submitted above are optional, not mandatory. *Vocalising* prayers is every bit as legitimate as a prayer written on paper ... I often even pray by simply *thinking* my prayers, especially in public and/or in the company of other people. For the past five or so decades I have been spending the first few seconds in bed in the morning by repeating the Lord's Prayer in my mind; I would do so even at night when I go to bed. I think it was Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911) who has said, *"There is not a softer mattress than the Will of God!"*

God (the Intelligent Designer of the Universe and all the various branches of the sciences) is infinitely creative and innovative, and it stands to reason that the intercessor should also be able to for instance *type his/her prayers on a personal laptop computer* instead.

Just make sure and back-up thoroughly so that such material does not get lost. The grandkids may even want to publish such an 'anthology' of prayers in a book one day, although mine, written in fast longhand, will never be erudite, readable or historically significant enough for public consumption; or it may

simply in time to come be hopelessly too voluminous and uneconomical to publish anyway. As far as I am concerned the only person who really needs to read and understand my prayers is God.

4. **The importance of publishing**. I just want to mention in passing that the Bible teaches that whatever we care to publish in support of the Gospel to promote evangelisation is probably highly regarded by God. A Prayer Journal may form part and parcel of our fallible human efforts to 'publish' the gospel, albeit it is meant for a private or personal audiences. The Bible says:

> *"The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it."*
>
> [Psalm68:11].

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Chapter 57

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO PRAY

1. **To PRAY is a command.** Jesus has admonished us to 'always pray' and 'never to faint'.

> *"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."*
>
> [Luke18:1KJV].

2. **For a Christian not to PRAY is a sin.** The prophet Samuel has taught that not to pray, especially for those you hold dear, is a sin.

> *"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way. "*
>
> [1Samuel 12:23KJV].

3. **Christians are taught to PRAY in secret.** Corporate prayer in public is often necessary, and good. Jesus Christ has, however, taught that those who prayed alone should pray in the 'secret of their closet', and not to always want to pray in public on street corners to make a big show of it like the hypocrites of His day.

> *"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."*

[Matthew6:5-6KJV].

"And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces."

[Mark12:38KJV].

"Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them."

[Luke11:43-44KJV].

4. **Persevering PRAYER may bring sweet reward.** Jesus Christ has taught that His Father would reward humble and sincere 'pray-ers' (i.e., intercessors, those who prayed humbly and sincerely) who prayed in secret and did so 'diligently' (persistently, industriously, meticulously).

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

[Matthew6:6KJV].

5. **No vain repetitions to be used when PRAYING.** Jesus Christ has taught that those who pray must not use vain repetitions like the heathen do (e.g., mournful chants repeated over and over, 'prayer-wheels' and beads) thinking God will reward them simply for a lot of words or much speaking.

"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

[Matthew6:7-8KJV].

6. **PRAYING for helpers.** Jesus Christ has admonished believers to pray the 'Lord of the Harvest' (God the Father) for 'helpers' *(e.g., apostles, evangelists, teachers, pastors, missionaries etc.)* to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

> *"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest ... Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*
>
> [Matthew9:37-38; 28:19-20KJV].

7. **PRAYERS are to be unified with faith.** Jesus Christ has taught that believers should 'pray & believe', and that praying without faith it was impossible to please God.

> *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is [EXISTS] and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*
>
> [Hebrews11:6KJV].
>
> *"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."*
>
> [Matthew17:20KJV].

8. **Believers to PRAY far and wide.** Jesus Christ has taught that believers should pray far and wide for all other believers and for their neighbour.

> *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou*

shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

[Matthew22:37-40KJV].

9. **PRAYER also for those in high places.** God wants Christians to pray for all men (people) and governments, kings and rulers irrespective of nation, race, ethnicity, culture, political affiliation or current religious persuasion because God wants all people everywhere to be saved and to live their lives in peace.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

[1Timothy2:1-5KJV].

10. **PRAYER for enemies.** Jesus Christ has taught that it would make no godly sense for them to just pray for those they loved, liked or who were positively disposed toward them, as it posed no particular challenge. True spirituality will prompt all good people who loved God to pray for their enemies too, in contrast to those 'religions' *(sic) that* teach that people from other religions must be hated, killed or destroyed.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which

love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

[Matthew5:43-48KJV].

"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you ... For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them ... But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

[Luke6:27-28, 32, 35-36KJV].

11. **Teaching disciples to PRAY.** The LORD'S Prayer:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

[Matthew6:9-13KJV].

12. **When Jesus PRAYED.** That night, probably in Gethsemane, Jesus spoke these words and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said:

"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

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"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

"And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

"And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

"And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

[John17:1-26KJV].

Chapter 58

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TOWARD ISRAEL

1. **Maintaining good relations with Israel.** Christians are not called to support the notorious, anti-Semitic BDS-movement but to support Israel, a small 'David-nation' (about the size of New Jersey or the Kruger National Park, South Africa) surrounded by hundreds of millions of 'Goliaths' inside a block of antagonistic, belligerent nations who want to deny Israel the right to existence and drive it into the sea.

Well, be that as it may, on at least recent three occasions (1948, 1967 and 1973) the humble slingshot of David has proved victorious over the giant swords of the belligerent Goliaths.

2. **Blessing Israel.** Bless, and do not curse Israel! As recommended by Professor J. Malan in his comment on 'British Israelism', we are encouraged to bless, not curse, Israel. The Bible says:

> *"And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed."*
> [Genesis12:3MKJV].

3. **Comforting Israel.** The Bible says:

> *"Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak lovingly to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is done, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins."*
> [Isaiah40:1-2MKJV].

4. **Praying for Israel.** The Bible says:

> *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; those who love you shall be blessed. Peace be within your walls, blessings within your palaces."*
> [Psalm122:6-7MKJV].

5. **Identifying with Israel.** Identify with Israel's right to and need for existence and recognition. Solidarity with Israel does not have to mean (as so many apparently believe) the rejection of the Palestinian's cry for statehood and self-determination. The Bible says:

> *"Then what is the superiority of the Jew? Or what is the profit of circumcision? Much, by every way! Chiefly, indeed, because they were entrusted with the oracles of God."*
> [Romans3:1-2MKJV].

6. **Supporting Israel Theo-Politically.** Theologically (and politically) the case for Israel is not lost. The Bible says:

> *"I say then, Did they not stumble that they fall? Let it not be! But by their slipping away came salvation to the nations, to provoke them to jealousy. But if their slipping away is the riches of the world, and their default is the riches of the nations, how much more their fullness?"*
> [Romans 11:11-12MKJV].

Israel's downfall will be all the nations' downfall; Israel's success will be all the nations' of the world's success.

7. **Taking the Gospel to Israel.** The people of Israel are as much candidates for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Salvation as anyone else. The Bible says:

> *"Speak lovingly to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is done, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins ... For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*
>
> [Isaiah40:2; Romans1:16MKJV].

The Bible also teaches:

> *"He [JEHOVAH] shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those with young."*
>
> [Isaiah40:11MKJV].

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Chapter 59

WHAT IT MEANS TO PRAY

1. **The meaning of the word 'pray' in the original languages of the Bible.** To 'pray' in the Biblical context could mean any one of the following:

1.1 Bea, Beah (Heb.): 'To request something'.
1.2 Chanan (Heb.): 'To plead for favour'.
1.3 Paga (Heb.): 'To confront something; to intervene'.
1.4 Athar (Heb.): 'To plead; to request something'.
1.5 Palal (Heb.): 'To assess oneself; to pray without ceasing'.
1.6 Tsela (Heb.): 'To bow down; kneel, pray'.
1.7 Siach (Heb.): 'To bow down, meditate and pray'.
1.8 Shaal (Heb.): 'To ask'.
1.9 Chalah (Heb.): 'To humble oneself'.
1.10 Deomai (Gk.): 'To need something, to pray and to beg'.
1.11 Erōtaō (Gk.): 'To ask or inquire'.
1.12 Euchomai (Gk.): 'To pray, to wish'.
1.13 Parak (Gk.): 'To call to, or walk alongside'.
1.14 Proseuchomai (Gk.): 'To be prayed or wished for, to pray towards'.
1.15 Ana, Anah (Heb.): 'I, we pray to You'.
1.16 Lu (Heb.): 'Oh, if only I ...!'
1.17 Na (Heb.): 'Pray'.
1.18 Tephillah (Heb.): 'Prayer; Song of praise'.
1.19 Deēsis (Gk.): 'Begging; Prayer; Request'.
1.20 Enteuxis (Gk.): 'Intercession; Prayer'.
1.21 Euchē (Gk.): 'A wish; Request'.
1.22 Pros (Gk.): 'To pray toward; To pour out toward'.

[Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible].

2. Jesus Christ teaches His Disciples on how to Pray.

> *"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*
> *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*
> *"Give us this day our daily bread.*
> *"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*
> *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."*
>
> [Matthew6:9b-13KJV].

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Chapter 60

CHRISTIANS AND THE APOCALYPSE: BRACE YOURSELVES

1. **The Honeymoon is over.** During the past number of years, the world has seen ISIS beheading dozens, if not many more of Christians, sometimes brazenly displayed on worldwide television.

In 2015 the Syrian archaeologist, Khaled Al-Asaad was beheaded by members of the same gang for refusing to lead them to where Palmyra's hidden antiquities were located. Brace yourselves ... the honeymoon is over; the gloves are coming off. Those who believe that Christians won't suffer persecution in this age are in for a rude awakening.

2. **'Rapture' Models & Issues.** This interesting field of study is currently dominated by basically four different models of the Rapture, i.e.

- No Rapture.

- Pre-Tribulation.

- Mid-Tribulation.

- Post-Tribulation Rapture.

In the final analysis, however, only one of these models can possibly be correct, unless all four are wrong altogether. No matter which model we espouse and preach, three of these are

one day going to be proved having been in error, with the proponents of the erroneous three not only in error i.r.o. the interpretation of Scripture (with leeway allowed in terms of Matthew 5:19) but also as 'false prophets' (not allowed by Scripture!) as any model advanced and guaranteed as a forecast about the future is catapulted immediately into the risky arena of Biblical prophecy.

3. **Persecution of the Church.** Those who naively think that the Church will not suffer persecution must think again; Christians have been suffering harassment & persecution for years. Speak to those beheaded by ISIS in recent times and Christians in places like China, North-Korea and elsewhere in Asia, the Middle East or Africa and they will laugh you out of the kitchen should they be told that the Church 'will not suffer persecution'.

4. **'Worthy to escape these things'.** Christians are not destined for wrath, and Christ's injunction for us to pray 'to be considered worthy to escape these things' is a reference to the wrath and judgments of God on the ungodly to come over the inhabitants of the earth (of which this worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, I surmise, is only a precursory preview) and not the promise of a Disneyland kind of Utopia of absolute immunity of the Church (Ecclesia) against persecution, irrespective of our pet 'Rapture model'.

Christians should learn the fundamental difference between *(i) suffering persecution for Christ and the Christian faith ('tribulation')* and *(ii) escaping the wrath poured out on the ungodly and the wicked in the end times.* A careful study of *Matthew Chapter24* will show that by the word 'tribulation' Jesus has meant the persecution of believers by a world or system hostile to the Church and believers, not 'wrath' or judgments'. Jesus Christ has indeed solemnly warned:

"... In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

[John16:33bKJV].

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Chapter 61

The Armour of God

1. Introduction. In his epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul admonishes Christians as soldiers in a field devoid of any convenient demilitarised zones, to be fitted out with the full armour of God:

"Finally, my brothers, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.
Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world's rulers, of the darkness of this age, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
Therefore take to yourselves the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
Therefore stand, having your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.
Above all, take the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching to this very thing with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.
And pray for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; so that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

[Ephesians6:10-20MKJV].

2. **The Armour of God figuratively affirmed elsewhere in the Bible.**

2.1 The Prophet Isaiah (Old Testament/Hebrew Bible).

"For He [JEHOVAH] put on righteousness like a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head. And He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was covered with zeal like a cloak."

[Isaiah59:17MKJV].

2.2 Epistle to the Romans.

"This also, knowing the time, that it is already time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in carousings and drinking; not in co-habitation and lustful acts; not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not take thought beforehand for the lusts of the flesh."

[Romans 13:11-14MKJV].

2.3 Epistle to the Corinthians.

"In the Word of Truth, in the power of God, through the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left ..."

[2Corinthians6:7MKJV].

"For though walking about in flesh, we do not war according to flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, pulling down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ; and having readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

[2Corinthians10:3-6MKJV].

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PART FIVE:

CHARITY

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Chapter 62

NEVER KNOCK GOOD WORKS

1. **Salvation only by Grace through Faith.** Although the basis for Salvation is FAITH (an accepted gift from God) in the Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not based on personal merit, moral perfection or exemplary performance, the basis for *Heavenly Reward* for believers engaged in or dedicated to humanitarian deeds appears to be appropriate good works (as defined by Jesus Christ Himself) discreetly performed.

As to the question of the role of good works in relation to faith, C.S. Lewis is reported to have said that, to decide between *faith* versus *good works* is like having to decide which blade in a pair of scissors is the most important.

The crux of the matter is that Christians get involved in good works not to be saved, but out of gratitude for having been saved. Some notes:

1.1 **Performing good works is a COMMAND from Jesus Christ Himself and from Scripture in general.**

" ... so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father who is in the heavens."

[Matthew5:16MKJV].

"... to do good, to be rich in good works, to be ready to impart, willing to communicate ..."

[1Timothy6:18MKJV].

1.2 **People full of good works will be COMMENDED by God and APPRECIATED in their community.**

"Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did."

[Acts9:36KJV].

1.3 **Jesus Christ Himself PERFORMED many good works during His ministry on earth.**

"Jesus answered them, I have shown you many good works from My Father; for which of these do you stone Me?"

[John10:32MKJV].

1.4 **Rulers (Governments) usually are not a terror to good works and shall shower PRAISE on those engaged in same.**

"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same."

[Romans13:3KJV].

1.5 **Christians were CREATED unto good works which God has ordained that they should walk in them.**

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them."

[Ephesians 2:10MKJV].

1.6 **Those who PROFESS that they know God but who are without any <u>good works</u> are considered 'abominable', 'disobedient' and 'unto every <u>good work</u> reprobate'.**

""They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient and reprobate to every good work."

[Titus 1:16MKJV].

1. 7 **Only those good works done DISCREETLY are usually rewarded by God.**

"Take heed that you do not do your merciful deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in Heaven. Therefore when you do your merciful deeds, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have glory from men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. But when you do merciful deeds, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does, so that your merciful deeds may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret Himself shall reward you openly."

[Matthew 6:1-4MKJV].

P.S. It may not always be possible to perform all good works 'discreetly'; some good works may of their very nature have to be performed in public, and that does not necessarily disqualify such good works from receiving a reward; let God be the truthful Judge. After all, rulers should know about some types of good works (officially performed) to commend such people or organisations for whatever reason.

It is not a sin for business entities etc. to perform good works in public (on the contrary), as it acts as an incentive for other businesses to do likewise. When good works are performed in public with ulterior motives, however, such good works, while commendable, may not necessarily be eligible for a reward. God will be the judge.

1.8 **Jesus Christ attached great value to the good works of His disciples and has promised APPROPRIATE REWARDS commensurate with the type of good works by such believers.**

"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He shall reward each one according to his works."

[Matthew 16:27MKJV].

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

[Revelation22:12KJV].

1.9 At the 'BEMA' JUDGMENT SEAT of Christ believers will formally receive rewards commensurate with their works on earth.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

[2Corinthians5:10KJV].

1.10 FIVE SPECIAL CROWNS are, as mentioned before, reserved for those who had excelled in their work for the Kingdom of God.

1.10.1 The Crown of Life.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

[James 1:12KJV].

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

[Revelation2:10KJV].

1.10.2 The Incorruptible Crown.

"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."

[1Corinthians9:25KJV].

1.10.3 The Crown of Righteousness.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

[2Timothy 4:8KJV].

1.10.4 The Crown of Glory.

"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

[1Peter 5:4KJV].

1.10.5 The Crown of Rejoicing.

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" [

1Thessalonians 2:19KJV].

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INVITATION

"For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

[Romans6:23MKJV].

"I call Heaven and earth to record today against you. I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live."

[Deuteronomy30:19MKJV].

RSVP

I herewith today accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour by accepting His invitation to Repent and believe the Gospel.

Signed

Date

"And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God draws near. Repent, and believe the gospel."

[Mark1:15-16MKJV].

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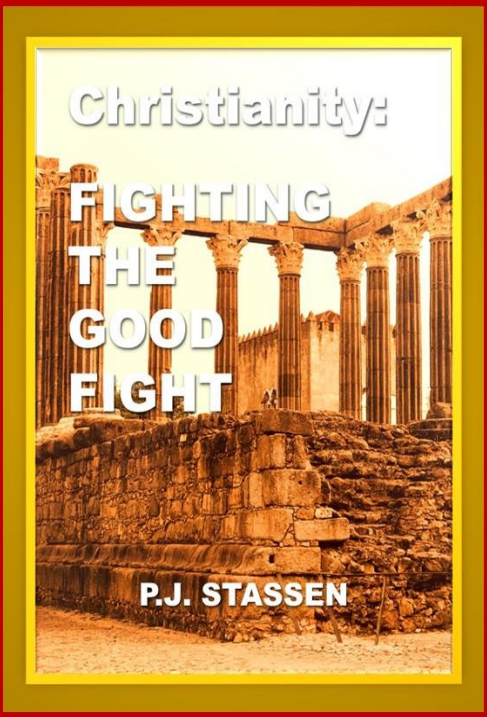
AUTHOR PROFILE

P. J. Stassen, born in 1947 in Randgate, South Africa, holds a B.A. degree in Industrial Psychology & Sociology (Industrial) from the University of South Africa. A former businessman who, after mandatory military conscription, spent the first 12 years of his life in 1966 in the field of retail (Textiles & General Dealer) in a family business begun by his father in 1964, thereafter worked at various other jobs eventually arriving in the fulfilling position of a corporate trainer with *Kumba Resources* (formerly *Iscor Iron Ore Mine*) in the Bushveldt region of South Africa during the years 1986 and 1997. At the time of his retirement in 2013 he was engaged in *Occupational Health & Safety Training* in the corporate environment on a contract basis for a Johannesburg company.

P.J. Stassen and his wife are both retired and live in Centurion, South Africa after having also served in their capacities as gospel musicians (pianist & organist respectively) in churches in places like Vanderbijlpark, Bloemfontein, Thabazimbi, Sinoville and Centurion.



Son of God, Son of David and Son of Man, He came to die for His own creation and for the sins of the world.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ; offered to all but forced on none.

Only one life that will soon be past; only what's done for this humble Carpenter-Rabbi from Nazareth will last.

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